

A MICRO-ANALYTIC STUDY OF GOSSIP IN ELDERLY TALK

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Abstract

The phenomenon of gossip, broadly defined as the evaluative and/or informative talk about absent third parties, has been one of the most commonly used forms of talk since the very beginning of the human interaction; and accordingly has been studied from various schools of research such as sociology, psychology, linguistics, religious studies etc. (Gluckman, 1963; Fine & Rosnow, 1978; Bergmann, 1993; Foster, 2004). However, the sequential organisation of gossip talk, and the topics of gossip still remain underexplored.

This study aims to investigate this underexplored phenomenon with an emic perspective in an old people's home in Turkey, where the body of research on gossip so far is limited to quantitative questionnaire data or participant perception based interview data. This PhD thesis adopts an Ethnomethodological approach, and the analysis draws on Sack's Conversation Analysis, to shed a light on 1) the sequential organisation and 2) the topics of gossip at a micro-analytic level. From a total of 92 evaluative gossip extracts of different lengths analysed for this study, 28 are presented in this thesis.

The results of the analysis add to the existent literature on two levels; the first one is sequential analysis of gossip, and the second is contextual elements present in gossip sequences. The results of the sequential analysis indicate that gossipers apply specific ways to introducing gossip, the gossip hearers have similar strategies to respond to the gossip initiation, and finally there is a systematicity in gossip endings. The second, contextual side, draws the attention to the ways in which elderly interact non-institutionally in this institutional context, and how they place themselves as experts in the society by the aid of their active use of language (i.e. gossip), by focusing on topics of gossip, gossip as an element of appraisal, gossip as a connection tool, teacher's fluid identity, use of proverbs, and the existence of religion-morality in gossip talk.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.0. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe and outline the research conducted for this thesis. The first part of the chapter will give a brief introduction to the existing literature on elderly communication and gossip research to outline the research gap to which this study fits, followed by the questions for which the researcher seeks answers. In the second part, the research context will be explained to enable visualization of the setting where the research took place. After the context, will follow a section on methodology where the method of analysis used for this research, namely Conversation Analysis, is introduced briefly. Then will follow a section on the objectives and the relevance of the study. The final section will outline the thesis.

1.1. Aim and Scope of the Study and Research Questions

Communication in various contexts (e.g. courtrooms, hospitals, schools, pubs), different languages, (English, Japanese, French, Chinese), and between people from dissimilar backgrounds and levels of education (doctors and patients, judges and defendants, friends) have been studied by scholars from different disciplines (Psychology, Sociology, Applied Linguistics) for decades, applying a wide range of methods of analysis (Discourse analysis, Case Studies, Conversation Analysis and so on) (Ford et al, 2002; Prevignano & Thibault, 2003; Liddicoat, 2007). Although there are quite a wide range of studies on human interaction, some areas still remain underresearched. One such area is gossip talk among the people at later stages of their lives. To meet this need for research on elderly casual talk, namely gossip, this ethnomethodologically driven Conversation Analytic research aims to investigate the communication between elderly people in an old people's home in Turkey. The main focus of this research is the old people's orientation to sequences constructed over gossip about an absent third party. Rather than setting off with a hypothesis driven approach, this study "let the data speak for themselves" in Gould's (1981) terms, and found gossip as one of the most common forms of talk amongst the residents.

This study has two important components to be looked into in literature which are *elderly interaction* and *gossip*. The existent literature on elderly research generally focuses on the health

issues the elderly face (Lehmkul et al, 1987; Gupta et al, 2000; Heinik, 2006; Fontenoy et al, 2007; Chiweshe & Gussha, 2012). The interactional studies on elderly generally evolve around the interaction between old people and their service providers such as physicians, care takers, families and so on (Coupland et al, 1994; Verhallen et al, 1999; Mattsson & Haring, 1999; Wei & Mayouf, 2009). However in this study, the elderly and their interaction among their own social group is investigated within a partly institutional setting where they interact with younger service providers as well, but not necessarily in a formal, institutional tone. Therefore, this study adds to the research body another dimension of *semi-institutionality* together with being of an interactive nature amongst the elderly.

The second aspect of literature that is relevant for this study is gossip. Gossip is one of the most common forms of talk in various contexts such as work places, different forms of media (oral or written), daily life, personal relations, and so on. (Emler, 1994; Dunbar et al, 1997; Slade, 1997). It has been investigated from different aspects, such as its definition focusing on the evaluative or nonevaluative scope (Gluckman, 1963; Hannerz, 1967; Fine & Rosnow, 1978; Sabini & Silver, 1982; Tebbutt, 1995; Dunbar 2004), its topics such as personal qualities and affairs (Gottman & Mettetal, 1986; Eder & Enke, 1991; Parker et al, 1994), fashion, dating, sex (Levin & Arluke, 1985; Saunders, 1999), and its functions of information, influence, and entertainment (Weiss & Weiss, 1970; Crawshaw, 1974; Spacks, 1982; Eder & Enke, 1991; Foster, 2004; Coie et al, 2007). However, the studies on real gossip interaction are, on a large part, limited to institutional talk (Parker & O'Reilly, 2012), and there are only a few studies on gossip amongst the peers in non-institutional settings (Bergmann, 1993). Especially when the specific context of Turkey is considered, the gossip studies generally either focus on mediated gossip, or depend on quantitative data or interview data (Solmaz, 2006; Cayli, 2008; Arabaci et al, 2012). There is no study in Turkey (to my knowledge) that investigate real gossip talk in interaction.

Another important component in this study is the existence of moral and religious elements in gossip sequences. Previous studies in literature refer to gossip's nature as a social and moral norm establishment tool (Bott, 1957; Yerkovich, 1977; Bergmann, 1998; Lipscomb, 2011), together with being an immoral act itself. This study points to the existence of religion in gossip talk, the same way the previously mentioned studies by Bott (1957), Yerkovich (1977), Bergmann (1998), and Lipscomb (2011) did for the existence of morality. The evaluation of an absent third party based on religious norms (normally they are moral norms, but the participants

orient to them as religious), and the gossip act's nature of being *sin* according to the participants (*immoral* in literature) is discussed in this current study.

By this way, the stated purpose of investigating what actually happens in elderly communication in terms of co-construction of gossip about others will be analysed in authentic communication data. On this respect, the following questions will be asked to the data:

- 1- How is gossip sequentially organised?
 - a) How does the gossip initiate gossip?
 - b) How do the participants orient to conversations on the negative evaluation of other people?
 - d) How do the participants in talk position themselves to gossip? How do they reflect their positive, negative or neutral stance to the initiated gossip?
 - e) How is the gossip ended?
- 2- What are the most common topics of gossip?
- 3- What are the common contextual features in gossip talk?

1.2. Research Context

The data set built for this research is a compilation of 100 hours of audio recorded conversations collected from a state owned old people's home in Turkey. The first group of participants for this research are the 53 residents of the institution. Although the concept of being *old* is a highly disputed issue among social researchers (Freund & Smith, 1999 discuss the concept in depth and also compare the outsider perception of old age with people's own definition of old age), this study will consider all the residents, aged between 57 to 83, as old people grounding on the fact that they stay at an old people's home. Apart from the residents of the place who are the main focus in this emic research, there are other participants in the recordings who happen to interact with them during the recordings. The first group are the two handicraft teachers who were sent to the institution as part of a social rehabilitation project. Another group of outsider participants are final year university students who are studying Elderly Care and Rehabilitation, and are present in the institution for their internship service. The recordings are from the tea tables on the female floors between 10:00-11:00 am and 14:00-15:00 pm throughout two months.

As has been stated previously, Turkey, one of the developing countries in the world, is experiencing a growth in its elderly population which ensues in a growing demand for old people's homes all around the country. According to a statement by the Ministry of Family and Social Politics in 2012, there are 290 institutions which function as old people's homes, 129 of them run by the ministry and 161 by private owners or organisations. The institution where this research takes place is one of these 129 government-run homes, and its name is kept anonymous for ethical reasons, as it is run by the government in that representative, average central Anatolian city.

1.3. Methodology

An ethnomethodological approach will be adopted for this research. Ethnomethodology is “a research policy focusing on the study of common-sense reasoning and practical theorising in everyday activities” (ten Have, 2007: p.6). As the definition suggests, one of the most appropriate ways to analyse the talk amongst the elderly is by conducting ethnomethodological research; so that the previously asked questions of “How is gossip sequentially organised?”, “What are the most common topics of gossip?”, and “What are the common contextual features in gossip talk?” can be answered, even with more specific foci in relation to what the data will bring with themselves.

Within the school of ethnomethodology, a micro-analytic approach will be taken for the analysis of the data. The data in the audio and the transcripts will be analysed at micro level with the framework of Conversation Analysis (CA). The following quotation from Susskind (2010) is a brief summary of the reason for using CA for the analysis of this interactional data:

“Conversation Analysis offers powerful lenses through which we can examine interaction patterns central to negotiation and mediation.” (p.163). Thus, this kind of CA work on naturally occurring interaction is expected to observe the participants while they are naturally doing being themselves in interaction.

As Conversation Analytic approach states expressly, the validity and the reliability of the study can be evaluated by the reader him/herself. The transcripts of the data analysed will be given in the analysis chapters, and in the discussion chapter when relevant. By this means, the reader can analyse the data while reading it, and check the validity and the reliability of the analysis made

by the researcher. Besides, parts of data have been presented at official MARG data sessions held by the PhD students at Newcastle University, and the unofficial data sessions we conducted with a group of peers (some speaking Turkish), by which outsider checks for the validity and reliability were made possible

1.4. Objectives and Relevance of the Study

This PhD thesis aims to have a closer look at elderly communication from a Conversation Analysis perspective to describe and explain what is going on in their real interaction when it comes to talking about others (i.e. gossip). The lack of research on naturally occurring talk amongst the elderly in a Turkish context, and more specifically their orientations to gossip about others from this communicative emic perspective make this research a significant one for the field. The results of this study are expected to help us understand how the elderly interact non-institutionally in this institutional context, and how they place themselves as experts in the society through their active use of language (i.e. gossip).

In this thesis, I have explained the phenomena of *elderly interaction* and *gossip*, and have drawn a picture of where the literature stands in these aspects both separately and combined. As will be obvious when the literature is reviewed, the concepts of elderly interaction and gossip have been studied from different angles up until now, and this study adds to the overall body of research by focusing on the topics of gossip, gossip as an element of appraisal, gossip as a connection tool, teacher's fluid identity, use of proverbs, and the existence of religion-morality in gossip talk. The misconception of relationship between morality and religion will be discussed from a data driven perspective. Although there are some studies that mention the concept of gossip in Islam, gossip's function as a morality indicator in Turkish society still remains an underexplored area. Also the difference between the humanistic vs religious approaches to morality in interaction combined with an analysis of structural and topical analysis of gossip, to my knowledge, is a new area which is explored in this study.

Another point that makes this study a noteworthy one is the fact that it both conflicts with and completes the studies that focus on the *ideal*, by studying the *actual* talk with a Conversation Analytic approach to real life data. In this study, the elderly and their interaction among their own social group is investigated within a semi-institutional setting where they interact with younger service providers as well, but not necessarily in a formal, institutional tone. The term

semi-institutional talk (see Section 2.3.1.) is used in this thesis to cover the interaction in institutions that are the only living environments for their residents who do not have a separate social life, such as orphan homes and old people's homes. Semi-institutional talk is an underexplored area, and is addressed in this study by the micro-analysis of casual talk extracts (i.e. gossip) that occur in an institutional context.

Therefore, this study adds up to the research body another dimension of *semi-institutionality* in elderly talk. In sum, this study tries to build on the existent literature by investigating the gossip phenomenon and its interactional elements from an emic perspective among the elderly in a culturally uniformed local context in Turkey.

1.5. Thesis Outline

This chapter has provided an introduction and overview to the research designed for this thesis together with an explanation of the aim and scope of the study followed by research questions, context and methodology. The next chapter will review the literature relevant for this study under three sub sections. The first sub section will cover the studies on elderly interaction from the perspectives of old people's home, and elderly interaction studies. The second one will deal with one of the most common forms of talk among the elderly, gossip, focusing on the definitions, topics and functions of gossip. The final section will narrow its focus down to the interactional gossip studies.

Literature Review Chapter will be followed by the Methodology, which will first cover the research design from the points of (1) purpose of study and research questions, (2) participants and context, (3) access and ethics, (4) data collection, and (5) transcription and translation. Following this section on design, Section 3.2 will explain the basics of method of analysis applied for this research, which are (1) Conversation Analysis, (2) reliability, and (3) validity. Chapter 4 will summarise the findings of the analysis of the sequential organisation of gossip in relation to gossip initiation, hearer's response, and sequence ending. The most common initiation types are found to be direct evaluation or news reveal, humour, fooling or sarcasm, questions, and reports of what a third party said. The response to these attempts to initiate are dealt with four sub categories depending on what act they do in conversation. They are clarification requests upon the recognition of a problem in understanding/hearing, treating the gossip as news and responding with surprise, agreement with the gossip point, and lack of agreement.

The second analysis chapter, Chapter 5, will cover the content of gossip. It will focus on six most common gossipable topics defined in the data which are, gossip itself, beliefs and morality, family and relations, personality, physical acts, and appearance. The topics will be followed by the last part of this chapter on one single positive gossip incident identified in the whole data set. Chapter 6 discusses the findings explained in Chapters 4 and 5. It draws the attention to the ways in which elderly interact non-institutionally in this institutional context, and how they place themselves as experts in the society by the aid of their active use of language (i.e. gossip) by focusing on topics of gossip, gossip as an element of appraisal, gossip as a (dis)connection tool, teacher's fluid identity, use of proverbs, and the existence of religion-morality in gossip talk. This chapter will end with a broader discussion on the elderly gossip talk, and the concept of semi-institutionality relevant for this study. The last chapter will conclude the whole study followed by the implications of the study, acknowledgement of the methodological concerns, and recommendations for future research. In sum, this study focuses on how the elderly interact among their own community of practice within a semi-institutional setting where they also interact with younger service providers, but not necessarily in a formal, institutional tone. The results of analysis suggest insights into how the elderly place themselves in the society by their use of language (i.e. gossip), and how they use gossip as a tool for self praisal, group connection, identity indication, and moral-religious stance-making.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.0. Introduction

This present study adds to the body of research that investigates the gossip interaction among people at the later stages of their lives in institutional settings. In order to draw the borderlines of the existent literature that this study builds on to, the literature review chapter of this thesis will focus on three main components of this current research: (2.1) elderly research, (2.2) gossip research in general, and (2.3) interactional research on gossip. The first section on elderly research will start with a brief introduction to the definition of old people's home, and types of studies conducted in these institutions, followed by a summary of the elderly interaction research from two perspectives, either between the elderly and the younger (e.g. family members, physicians, care-takers), or amongst the elderly themselves, as this study combines both being mostly around the elderly in-group interaction. The last sub section will briefly summarise the concept of Community of Practice. The second part, the previous research on gossip will be dealt with emphasising the topics, functions of gossip and the relation between morality, religion and gossip. The last part will introduce the interactional studies on gossip.

2.1. Elderly Research

2.1.1. Old People's Home

Old people's home, also known as *nursery home*, *care home*, *rest home* or *retirement home*, is a government or private led institution where people over a certain age stay, and are looked after by educated health and personal care staff. There are two different types of care homes for the elderly people in Turkey. One is the rehabilitation centres where physically disabled old people are taken care of, and the other one is the standard old people's home, where people at the later stages of their lives stay and socialize. The studies in old people's homes are briefly described here, because gossip is an interactive form of talk (i.e. context shaped), and the context for this thesis is an old people's home, which can be defined as a 'semi-institutional' context as it is a social living area for the residents while being managed by the set rules of the organisation. (See Chapter 3 for more detail in the context of this research, and Section 2.3.1 for an in-depth discussion on the issues of institutionality/non-institutionality/semi-institutionality).

When a deep analysis of literature is conducted into the area of old people's homes, it becomes apparent that the most common area of research is health care studies where the residents of the

institution are investigated in terms of their state of health (Lehmkul et al, 1987; Gupta et al, 2000; Heinik, 2006; Fontenoy et al, 2007; Chiweshe & Gusha, 2012). For example Lehmkul and his scholars focus their study on mentally ill residents in old people's homes and discuss their care needs (1987). Similarly, in Turkey, most of the old people's home studies are interview and/or questionnaire dependent health care studies. For example Gulseren et al. study the signs of depression and life quality relation of the residents of old people's homes (2000), or Gemalmaz et al. investigate the walking and balance situations of old people (2004). The findings of such studies are valuable in that they give insights into the residents' physical health; however, they are limited in that they ignore the social side.

Although relatively less in quantity, some of the studies in old people's homes focus on the other aspects of the institution such as psychological wellbeing of the residents, social dynamics, relations between the residents and the staff, and so on. For example, Petrov and Vlahlijska (1972) conducted a longitudinal study over a five year period on the effects of Cultural Therapy on elderly people and found that when applied to the right group of people with appropriate "mental features, personalities, intellectual levels, and general health conditions" (p.429), it gives the elderly the chance to express themselves socially, and protects them from being isolated from the society. Another quantitative study (Rothwell et al, 1983) focuses on the effects of living in a group in an old people's home. It examines the "purposeful activity" and "engagement" levels before and after a resident starts to live with a group of other old people. The results indicate that the life satisfaction of most participants has increased after starting to live within a group.

Although Rothwell et al.'s study sheds a light on the conception of the elderly in terms of their perceptions of living there, it should be noted here that this can be a culture/context-dependent phenomenon. Other studies, in some way opposition to Rothwell et al, focus on the abuse, neglect, cruelty in old people's homes (Olin et al, 1992; Manthorpe, 2015). Apart from these two factual studies where the results rely on what is actually happening, this current research has access to the participants' insights about 'having to stay' there, or 'being left' there, which are two of the common topics of talk among the elderly. The findings of two earlier studies in Turkey by Isik (2002) and Karaca (2010), who conducted questionnaire and interview research, also show that some of the residents express negative attitudes toward staying at an old people's home. Therefore, staying at an old people's home can be investigated from different perspectives in different contexts, especially if the society in question has a cultural norm of 'taking care of

parents when they get old', as it is the case in Turkey. This issue will be elaborated more in the analysis when it becomes relevant.

One relevant study in Turkish old people's homes is conducted by Akgul (2004) where he looks at the relationship between religiousness and happiness. Although the intention of the study seems relevant to the Turkish context where religion plays an important role in some parts of the country, the claims of this study cannot be strongly supported by the questionnaire items they include to test the level of religiously committedness and happiness. The first part of the rating scale used for this survey claims to test the religiously committedness level of the participants by asking them such questions as "Do you believe in God?, Do you believe that Muhammad is the prophet?, Do you believe in life after death?, Do you pray five times a day?, How often do you go to the mosque?, Do you fast?, Do you read Quran?, How often do you visit cemeteries?, How often do you think about death?, How do you feel when you can't worship?, How do you feel when you forswear?, How knowledgeable are you about religion?, How often do you join religious events?, How many of your friends are religious?". From the findings of this part, the researcher defines the religiousness level of the participants. The second part tests the level of happiness and wellness by asking the participants questions like "How is your general health state?, How is your psychological state?, Do your relatives care about you?, Are you happy with the friendships in the old people's home?, Are you satisfied with the staff?, Do you consider committing suicide?, Do you feel peaceful?, Do you think life is worth living?, Do you think your life is meaningful?, Can you say that you are happy?". This part is used to analyse the happiness and satisfaction levels. The quantitative analysis of the data collected from this survey shows a positive relation between being religious and being happy, and the researcher claims that religion is the sole reason for happiness. Both because the items in the questionnaire are not inclusive, and also because all the other internal and external variables that are likely to affect happiness and satisfaction are neglected, the findings of this study are not quite valid. Having given a brief introduction to the context of the research, the next section will review the existent literature on research on elderly interaction.

2.1.2. Research on Elderly Interaction

Throughout the history of social research, many studies have focused on the elderly people in terms of health, communication, needs, care giving, etcetera. Considering the fact that the overall population of the elderly all around the world is growing rapidly as a consequence of the development of countries and their current birth rate policies (based on UN's report on World Population and Aging), the potential of the elderly research to keep its popularity among the medical and social researchers is relatively high. In a narrower sense for this specific study, the same growth applies to the distribution of the population among age groups in Turkey likewise. According to a research by the WHO in 2013 on the life expectancy of the population in all the countries on earth, which unveils the life expectancies based on the birth and death rates and age distributions in each country, the life expectancy of the individuals in Turkey has reached to 74.4 years. Although this is lower than most developed countries, it still points to a growth in older population, which necessitates more research on this group to first understand their needs, and second to meet them. Hence, a brief look at the literature globally and locally draws the existent picture of the elderly research and indicates the gap to be filled by this study.

Up until now, most of the elderly communication studies have focused on their communication with doctors and care takers in health context in an urge to improve care-taker education. In 1999, a group of four nursing and caring researchers, Verhallen, Gruijter, Kerkstra, & Bensing, conducted a comprehensive research on the factors that affect nurse communication with old people, quantitatively analysing 181 videotaped nursing encounters between 47 nurses and 109 old patients accompanied with pre and post questionnaires completed by the nurses. The results of this study show that the education level of the nurses play the most important role on the nurse-elderly communication while patient characteristics like the age, gender, background have a minor role. Instead of looking at the interaction itself, it focuses on the nurses' conception of that interaction. This study is important when its results and contribution are considered. However, the quantitative method of analysis it adopts to explain human communication contradicts with the aim of the research, because it underestimates the dynamics in real interaction, and simply focuses on the understandings of the participants.

One more research project that studied elderly communication for the purpose of improving nurse education is designed by Mattsson and Haring (1999). They analyse the transcriptions of the video recordings of verbal and non-verbal face to face communication between the patients

and care givers. This study uses a relatively different design as it does not only work with the SPSS results the way the previous one does, but qualitatively analyses transcripts and has interviews with the participants to discuss their interpretations of the interaction. These given here and many more researchers have studied different aspects of elderly and professional communication. The most common aim of this kind of research is to understand the communication dynamics in elderly care taking context, and to come up with advice for the education of the staff.

Narrowing down to the local context of this study, which is Turkey, the research conducted on elderly communication so far is not excessive, besides the few existent ones are mainly based on the conception in the participants' minds, not on naturally occurring real interactions. This should not be misinterpreted as meaning that these studies are not of import, of course they are; but rather points to the existence of a methodological gap together with the contextual gap which has been explained above. For instance, one of the earlier studies by Bolukbasi and Arslan (2003) directed 34 questions to 60 residents in an old people's home with regards to their attitude towards staying in an old people's home, and its consequences on their psycho-social wellbeing. The results of this study indicate that 91.7% of the participants stated that they are content about staying there, which shows a high level of satisfaction. However, the analysis of real life interaction of the elderly in this thesis gives opposite evidence that they feel 'left by their families'. Similarly in a current study, Dereli et al. (2010) concluded that there is a direct relation between the level of loneliness among the elderly and their communications with the others in the community. As has been previously pointed out, although these and similar studies are significant for the understanding of the elderly and their communication, the need for a closer look into the actual interaction as it naturally occurs in talk is still substantial to get an idea of the *real*, rather than the *ideal*.

One study that differs from the previous ones in that it adopts an emic perspective, and looks closer into the dynamics of interaction as it naturally occurs in doctor- elderly patient consultations is conducted by Coupland et al. in 1994. In this early study, they ask the question of "How do doctors and elderly patients collaborate in and negotiate the work of entering an apparently medical frame of talk?" (p.89) to audio recorded data from a geriatric clinic, by analysing the conversations at micro level. As a result of the analysis, they conclude that, in their data there is no "pernicious interactional asymmetry and frame conflict" (p.119). In other words,

both doctors and patients equally contribute to the interaction, as is the general case in this current study.

Another important research worth mentioning here, on medical staff elderly interaction, is the Conversation Analytic study by Robinson and Nussbaum (2004), which focuses on the issue of religion as a common topic of conversation proposed by elderly patients but failed to be oriented by the physician. For this study, the researchers collect data from 71 routine visits by 12 different physicians to their elderly patients. The findings suggest that religion as a topic of conversation arises in 13 % of the visits, and each time the patient does the initiation and the physicians stay inattentive to the topic. The findings are discussed in a manner to suggest church attendance as a means of social support together with the ethical limitations of offering religion as a health care professional. This study stands out as it has a partly similar point to the current research, because religion as a topic is observed in this current data set too (see Section 6.3 for a more detailed discussion on religion in elderly gossip).

In a similar study 5 years later, Wei and Mayouf (2009) apply the same methodology, Conversation Analysis, to define the “effects of social status of the elderly” (p.136) in their interaction with younger physicians. They analyse both the conversations between the elderly patients and their physicians, and then interview the physicians about their experiences of working with the elderly in comparison to the younger patients. One of the important claims often raised in the interviews is that the physicians reported that they cannot practice their institutional concessions when the patients are elderly. From the analysis of the conversations, it is pointed that the elderly tend to initiate small talk about the religious matters, family relations, and other out-of-task topics. As a result of micro analysis of the natural interaction and the interviews, they come to the conclusion that the social status of the elderly affects the interaction, ending in more contribution from the patients than the younger physicians.

Apart from the above given elderly-caregiver interaction studies, one of the early group of researchers who conducted a series of research on elderly *peer-to-peer*, rather than *care-giver*, interaction were Boden and Bielby (1986), and they focused on the “topical organisation in elderly conversation” (p.73). For this study, they pointed to the way age was understood as made relevant in talk through the topical organisation of interaction. They state that their aim with this research is to understand the “experience of older persons” (p.73) within their own age groups, which they claim, and we can still claim after twenty years, to be an underexplored area. The

data they use for this study comes from various settings such as an experimental casual talk context that they create between pairs of people over 62, and some from non-experimental natural talk in Senior Centres in London and US etc. Their results indicate that one of the most common topics of talk among the elderly is *past*, and contrary to the common belief that it is a signal of regret, the mentioning of the old good times is “a functional and effective form of communication, one which is essentially present-oriented, as well as expressive and practical.” (p.85). The evidence in the data collected for this thesis supports this finding in a totally different context and era, but is not discussed in detail as the focus of this research (gossip) is different to the one of Boden and Bielby’s (ibid).

As is obvious from the literature, conversation analytic studies, when compared to the questionnaire/interview based ones, offer the researcher a deeper insight into what really is happening in talk-in-interaction, instead of the generally idealised views of the participants. However, in literature, especially in the context of this study, which is Turkey, ethnographies of old people’s homes is still an underexplored area. Instead, all the elderly studies in Turkey are based on interviews and questionnaires. The ethnography of elderly interaction, either institutionally or non-institutionally is still open for research, which this thesis is trying to initiate. Conversation Analysis as a research methodology and a framework itself, which will be discussed deeper in the next chapter, has not yet attracted the attention it deserves for interaction studies in Turkey. Elderly research is no different. There is no single research (to my knowledge) that analyses conversations between elderly people at micro level to get an insight of one of the most common forms of talk when the population of the elderly considered. Although it is not realistic to claim to fill the huge gap of ethnographic studies in elderly research in Turkey by one single research on elderly gossip interactions, this study aims to take the initiative to open the area for new researchers by getting their attention to the need for more research.

Having introduced a brief outline of the studies on old people’s homes and elderly interaction, the last part in this section will describe how an old people’s home is a community of practice.

2.1.3. Old People’s Home as a Community of Practice (CoP)

In this section, the above described context of an old people’s home will be defined based on the theory of *Community of Practice*, first describing the term introduced by Lave and Wenger

(1991), then explaining how an old people's home is a Community of Practice.

While discussing CoP, the broadest idea would be the fact that "We all belong to communities of practice" (Wenger, 1998: p.6), which means, all the social contexts that we- as human beings- live, work, study, share, shop, enjoy, etc. are forms of CoP, and one can belong to more than one CoP at any given time. For instance, while a person is a member of a CoP at school, that same person can belong to a totally different CoP at the same time if s/he has a part time job where s/he works as a sales assistant. In its simplest definition, as Wenger (ibid) puts it, "communities of practice are everywhere." (p.6). In order to discuss the idea that an old people's home is also a community of practice, first a definition and description of the term is necessary.

The initial emergence of the term *Community of Practice* was related to learning-teaching theories by Lave and Wenger (1991), where they explored the concept of "situated learning" (p.14), which covers the type of learning that emerges within working practices of people such as internship programmes. Later on, the concept became more common in other areas of research such as language and gender studies, which is closer to the concept of CoP that is used for this thesis. As the introducers of the term into the language and gender studies, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) define a CoP as:

"An aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor. As a social construct, a CofP is different from the traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages" (p.464).

As the definition suggests, a CoP is a group of people who come together around a common aim or interest, basically anywhere in life. CoPs are "groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise." (Wenger et al, 2002: p.4). Informality, group membership, and sharing are the main elements of a CoP. CoP research is initially interested in the membership roles of the participants in the group, which is followed by their participation and orientation to the world in a general sense. It links the individual to the community, and the community to the larger society.

Wenger (1998) focuses on the necessity of "characterizing social participation as a process of learning and of knowing" (p.4). He lists three crucial dimensions of a CofP:

- 1) "mutual engagement" refers to the fact that participants are mutually engaged in practice, and that practice is not an abstract phenomenon by its own. Instead, people give meaning

to practices through mutual engagement with each other, which covers the negotiation of meaning. This mutual engagement binds the members of the community together as a social unit.

- 2) “a joint negotiated enterprise” means that members create a shared understanding of the ties that keep them together through their interactions, rather than being individual-based, or being dependent on factors out of members’ control.
- 3) “a shared repertoire” refers to the idea that heterogeneous members gain coherence within the community through sharing and belonging to that specific CoP. The community as a whole introduces a shared repertoire both literally and symbolically (p.72-84).

Given the above listed and described dimensions, a CoP mainly focuses on the members, and their interaction within the community. Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) say that “the process of becoming a member of a CoP – as when we join a new workplace, a book group, or a new family (e.g. through marriage) – involves learning.”(p.174). They explain the process beginning with becoming a *peripheral member* upon joining the community, and then upgrading to a *core member* depending on the level of sharing.

As has been described all through this section, communities of practice are everywhere, and are built with the shared experiences of members. Old people’s homes are no exception to this concept of CoPs being everywhere, where people mutually engage in a joint enterprise to produce a shared repertoire. As will be discussed further in analysis and discussion chapters of this thesis, the context of this study, old people’s home, forms a typical example to a CoP where members (either peripheral or core) interact with each other, and exchange knowledge (Paquette, 2006). The main theme of this thesis, *gossip*, which will be handled in Section 2.2, is one of the most common forms of knowledge exchange in social interaction between members of a group where experiences are shared at a high level. Together with the knowledge exchange system in group dynamics, the membership types share similarities with CoPs. That is, in the data set used for this thesis, although there is quite a large number of residents who participate in talk, the core and peripheral members are easily identifiable by the proportion of interaction they engage in. The interactional data collected for this thesis is mainly composed of *shared practice*. The interaction between the residents of the old people’s home is not analyzed “in virtue of shared abstract characteristics (e.g. class, gender) or simple co-presence (e.g. neighbourhood,

workplace), but in virtue of shared practice.” (Eckert, 2006: p.1). The development of information/knowledge transfer during their socializing time depends on the residents’ shared practices in interaction, and the analysis of the real life data extracts prove that old people’s home functions like a Community of Practice for the residents.

The first section of this chapter has dealt with the research related to old people and old people’s homes. It has first explained the studies on old people’s homes, and studies on interaction between medical-care stuff and the elderly. Then, it has pointed to the insufficiency of studies on interaction ‘between’ elderly people on less professional daily activities. Finally, it has given an overview of the concept of Community of Practice, and briefly explained how the concept relates to the context of this study (i.e. old people’s home) leaving the further discussion for a later chapter (Chapter 6) because it needs further argument from the result of the data analysis. Having given a brief introduction to the concept of elderly interaction, the next section will introduce the gossip phenomenon.

2.2. Gossip

The second important component to be reviewed for this thesis is the concept of gossip as it aims to build on to the broad research body on gossip interaction. Gossip, briefly defined as idle talk (Chen, 2013), is commonly associated with women and old people because of its free-time filling nature and the traditional perception that women and old people have more free time to talk about ‘nonsense’ than the working class male. (West, 1945: p.99; Gluckmann, 1963; Percival, 2000). Although this idea is highly open to debate and has nothing to do with the arguments of this thesis, it still does not change the fact that gossip in elderly interaction is an underexplored area, and needs further research. This thesis aims to fill in this research flaw. This section will first give a broad picture of the gossip research in general, followed by the relationship between gossip, morality and religion, and will end by giving an overview of the cognitive, experimental, and psychological studies on gossip to form a basis for the interactional research on the same phenomena that will follow in the last section.

2.2.1. Etymological Origins and Definition of Gossip

“Gossip is what no one claims to like, but everybody enjoys.”

Joseph Conrad

Gossip, as has been stated in a speech by famous British-Polish novelist Joseph Conrad, is one of the most common forms of talk in various contexts such as work places, different forms of media (oral or written), daily life, personal relations, etc. (Emler, 1994; Dunbar et al, 1997; Slade, 1997). The etymological origins of the word *gossip* relates back to the term *god sibb* (god parents, either male or female). Although it originally referred to any of the god parents of the child, later on it became only the closest female friend of the mother. In time, it lost its religious content, and started to refer to female friends who help the woman during child delivery, baby care, houseworks, and so on. The talk and information exchange between the mother and the god sibs was called gossip. The commonly believed origin comes from the idea that, these god sibs of the baby would spread news outside upon the baby’s birth and that is how the concept of gossip came closer to what it means today (Tebbutt, 1995). According to a definition by Gluckman (1963), gossip means “the general interest in the doings, the virtues and vices of others” (p.312), and this definition is helpful because it covers the very basics of gossip in its shortest form before we go deeper into more details of gossip.

The definition of the term has always been a matter of dispute from centuries ago till the recent studies on gossip (Anderson et al, 2011; Grosser et al, 2012; Peng et al, 2015). Although the general concept of gossip in society is negative, scholars have debated if it is informative only, or evaluative in nature. Some say that gossip is the talk about an absent party even if the content is negative, positive or neutral, information transmission of any kind that basically refers to *idle talk* or *killing time together* (Gluckman, 1963; Fine & Rosnow, 1978; Dunbar, 2004). Although the definition of gossip in its most general sense covers neutral information exchange as well as evaluative talk, the neutral side is generally omitted by researchers because of the difficulty of differentiating between neutral gossip and non-gossipy talk. One recent study that takes this neutral stance together with the evaluative one is designed to test the “visual impact of gossip” which looks at the facial expressions of interactors during gossip sequences (Anderson et al, 2011). In this study, the researchers describe the phenomenon of “neutral face” elicitation by “(A) negative gossip; (B) positive gossip; (C) neutral gossip; (D) negative nonsocial information;

(E) positive nonsocial information; (F) neutral nonsocial information.” (p.1446). They conclude that gossip as a means of social learning affects the looks of the gossip recipient in a downward manner. As it looks at the reactions of the hearers, neutral gossip is as important as evaluative gossip for the results of this specific study. However, for most research on gossip, neutral information transfer is not considered as gossip, because of the fact that including neutrality in the gossip definition makes it hard for the researcher to differentiate between ordinary chatting and gossiping.

The second group of researchers, who are more common, prefer to emphasize the evaluative nature of the term, either negative or positive, and exclude the neutral, information transmission function of the gossip sequences. (Hannerz, 1967; Gilmore, 1978; Sabini & Silver, 1982; Gottman & Mettetal, 1986; Besnier, 1989; Tannen, 1990; Bergmann, 1993; Parker et al, 1994; Rosnow, 2001; Baumeister et al, 2004; Grosser et al, 2012). In this respect, Machiavelli (1995, cited in Foster, 2004) draws the borders of gossip explicitly stating that when people are talked about, they “are remarked upon various qualities which bring them either praise or blame” (p.89), in which the neutral side is omitted while the positive and negative elements are taken into consideration. For example, an experimental study on evaluative gossip by McAndrew et al. (2007) looked at gossip “as a strategy for status enhancement” (p.1562), and found that depending on the closeness to the gossipee and gossip hearer, the gossipers were likely to pass on “negative news about rivals, and positive news about friends and lovers” (p.1562). Another later research (Ellwardt et al, 2012) tested the relationship between friendship and gossip in workplaces with a longitudinal quantitative data analysis. The researchers compared the effects of negative and positive gossip on friendship building, and found the negative gossip to be more effective than positive one both for friendship building and unpopularity. Similarly in a more recent study in 2014, Georganta et al. looked more specifically at the negative gossip and its effects on burnout in healthcare environments with a quantitative approach, which covered 6 countries (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia and Republic of Macedonia) with 532 participants and discussed gossip’s organisational function on healthcare staff, despite its methodological limitations. Another experimental cognitive study in 2015 (Peng et al.) looked at the effects of negative and positive gossip about celebrities and self, and found that people were hiding their true feelings of joy over hearing negative gossip about celebrities. Although cognitive studies can be limiting for such areas, it still gives an idea about the difference between

people's 'claimed' stance and 'showed' stance which is one of the main discussions of this thesis (see Section 6.3.3). On the other hand, some studies adopt more reasonable qualitative approaches keeping the interactional and social element of gossip in mind while evaluating its positive and/or negative nature. However, these researches are mainly around workplace interactions or institutional contexts while this current study focuses on a semi-institutional context where participants interact with each other in 'friendly' terms, and the institutional context is only created by the talk itself very rarely, which is described in the analysis chapter of this thesis.

In this current study, the evaluation based definition of the term will be adapted, and the scantiness of the positive gossip (there is one single example) will be discussed as a separate section after the analysis because it turns out as an important phenomenon from the data (Section 5.7.). This study follows the example of the researchers who used evaluation based definition (Hannerz, 1967; Gilmore, 1978; Sabini & Silver, 1982; Gottman & Mettetal, 1986; Besiner, 1989; Tannen, 1990; Bergmann, 1993; Parker et al, 1994; Rosnow, 2001; Baumeister et al, 2004; Grosser et al, 2012), and does not include the neutral information transfer as gossip; because the data used in this thesis is collected from casual talk among (mostly) peers who already know each other, and almost all of their interaction is based on talking about 'absent others'. Therefore, when the limits of this thesis together with the unmanageable amount of neutral information passing talk about absent persons in the data are considered, the researcher took the initiative to narrow the focus of the research to the evaluative only gossip, which both saved space, and also allowed a more in-depth analysis.

While defining the gossip for this thesis, Hannerz's (1967) 3 features of gossip, which are (1) connoting a rare information, (2) being related to the local context, and (3) gossiped about person not necessarily familiar to the gossip hearer, will be taken as the guideline for picking the gossip extracts. Hannerz's study is an early observational empirical study for which he observes speech and interaction events in an inner-city lower-class Negro neighbourhood. The aim of his study is to observe the social and cultural variables affecting gossip, and the results indicate that gossip is strongly "tied to the social context in which it occurs." (p.35). The features listed by Hannerz is applied while picking the gossip extracts for this thesis, because it is an empirical study like this current one, and these features came into being as a result of real life observations. Another relatively more recent empirical CA study by Bergmann (1993), which is one of the main

resources for this research in terms of method and focus (see Section 2.3. for more detailed information on Bergmann's conversation analytic study), picks gossip extracts in a similar manner. Although it is not openly expressed, it is obvious from the nature of the gossip extracts analysed for Bergmann's study where scarce information related to the local context are shared. The terms of address adopted in this thesis should also be outlined here as, in literature, there is a variation in addressing the parties in gossip. Lexically, the word gossip is both a verb and noun which means to talk about other people in their absence (verb), the talk about other people, the act of gossiping (noun1) and someone who talks about other people behind their back (noun2). In order to avoid ambiguities, in this study gossip will be used with its meaning to describe the action, but the person who gossips will be addressed as a *gossiper*. The person who hears the gossip is the *gossip hearer*, and the gossiped about person is the *gossipee*. Having given the debate about the definition of the term gossip, and drawn the borders of the definitions and address terms used for this study, the rest of this section will first discuss the gossipable topics studied from the other scholars' perspectives. Then will follow the functions of gossip, focusing mainly on the positive and negative sides of the argument in the literature. The last section will describe and discuss the studies on the structural organisation of gossip.

2.2.2. Topics of Gossip

"Gossip is a topical assertion about personal qualities or behaviour, usually but not necessarily formulated on the basis of hearsay, that is deemed trivial or nonessential within the immediate social context" (Fine & Rosnow, 1978: p.161). As Fine and Rosnow, as two important names on gossip research, explicitly state in their definition of the term, the topics of gossip can be *personal qualities* and/or *behaviours* of people. While agreeing with this initial observation, later studies add *personal affairs* to this list of gossip topics. (Gottman & Mettetal, 1986; Eder & Enke, 1991; Parker et al, 1994). Emler, while agreeing with these, adds contacts whose names are openly expressed as the most common subject of gossip (1990).

Although there are many studies, as exemplified earlier, that mention the topics of gossip, there are no studies that separately focus on the issue. They generally mention it as a sub result of their research. For example, Katzman (1972) looks at the topics of mediated gossip on television soap operas focusing mainly on the size of the audience and the possible effects on them. In another study, Levin and Arluke (1985) compare the gender differences in gossip behaviours and, as one

of the various results, they discuss that women and men have some differences in terms of subject of gossip – i.e. women mainly gossip about “intimate friends and relatives” while men focus on “distant acquaintances and media celebrities”- and similarities in terms of gossip topics for which both groups were reported to talk about “dating, sex, and personal appearance” (p.285). The percentage of gossip about dating and sex was around 16% of their overall conversations. Similarly, 12% of the gossip focused on appearance of others. Despite these similarities, the reliabilities of which are open to debate as the research ignores all the variables other than gender, the researchers conclude that there are sex differences of friendships. A later study by Saunders (1999), specific to elderly people, summarises the topics of old women’s gossip under four categories, “fashion, dating, sex, and problems of living” (p. 267). Although it is not easy to generalise from one single study, it can still be assumed that there are differences in gossip topics between different age groups, as well as similarities such as sex and dating. This is a culture specific issue, and will be compared and elaborated more on in Section 6.2.1.

2.2.3. Functions of Gossip

“Gossiping about the enemy can result in a war.”

(African Proverb)

The above African proverb summarises the traditional global understanding of the term gossip. Starting from the early definitions of the term, it was supposed to include a negative meaning and malicious nature in society. Although Mellencamp (1992) discusses that “good gossip serves a socially useful purpose, fostering solidarity and communal identity, and encouraging normative behaviour; bad gossip is malicious, scandalous, and disruptive of community” (p.168), research on the phenomenon from a functionalistic perspective shows that it has certain social functions even if it is positive or negative (Paine, 1967; Epstein, 1969; Gilmore, 1978; Almirol, 1981). Considering the fact that gossip takes up a crucial part of conversational time (Dunbar et al, 1997), it is highly expected to have some functions in society, which are listed as “information, influence, and entertainment” (Stirling, 1956: p.263). Gluckman (1963) agrees with this functionalistic view and defines the social function of gossip as conserving “the unity, morals and values of social groups” (p.309). Many studies following this classification by Stirling have focused on the functions of gossip and shown those functions in different parts of the society,

especially in institutional contexts (Rosnow, 1977; Dunbar, 2004; Grosser et al, 2012). This section briefly explains the functionalist view on gossip with reference to recent studies on the 3 main functions of gossip, as the findings of this current thesis also supports this functionalistic view pointing to the importance of gossip in many ways which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

a) Information:

The first function gossip adopts at group or individual level is its nature of information transferer, especially when it comes from a reliable source such as a close friend or family member. By functioning as an information transfer tool, gossip shapes people's attitudes according to the existent norms and rules of the society the gossiper, gossipee and the gossip receiver share. (Weiss & Weiss, 1970; Eder & Enke, 1991). Apart from this societal norm-based function, it also helps the participants get knowledgeable about the events happening in the society they live in. This relates more to the definition of gossip as idle talk about others, so the individuals share information about others in the society to keep up to date with what is happening privately in other people's lives. (Schoeman, 1994). Collecting information about what is happening in others' lives also helps people to praise themselves about their positive sides on the same topic which will be further discussed in the discussion section of this thesis (Suls, 1977). Besides these personal/societal levels, the information transferring function of gossip is mainly dealt with at an institutional communication level. Researchers have successfully shown that information gathering through gossip helps improve both social relations and the productivity in the institution because it provides insights for the managers of the institutions. (Michelson et al, 2010; Grosser et al, 2012; Houmanfar & Johnson, 2014). Taylor (1975) focuses on the community level information transfer of gossip where he discusses the importance of gossip and rumour for therapeutic purposes, and concludes that it helps to collect information about the patients. Apart from the organisational gossip, mediated gossip on TV or magazines is also considered as a form of information spreading gossip type and is the second most commonly studied form in literature (e.g. Post, 1994; Herriman, 2010; McNamara, 2011).

b) Influence:

The second function gossip holds in society is its influentality which is also closely related to the information exchange function. As has been outlined in the gossip definition adopted for this

thesis, gossip has an evaluative content, and this influencing function is related to that evaluative nature. The influence effect of gossip refers to the change gossip creates in individual and/or the society. (Fine & Rosnow, 1978). That is, change is necessary for gossip to be influential. Accordingly, Foster mentions the parties' agreement on the standards of acceptable behaviour as one of the conditions for influential gossip (2004). It means, when both the gossip and the gossip recipient(s) agree on the norm/action that is being criticised, the change it creates will be parallel to that norm. Crawshaw (1974) relates gossip for influence with self-defensive mechanism of the gossip which will be revisited as gossip as a self-praising activity in 6.2.2. This function is relevant to both gossip in workplace situations or non-institutional contexts. The gossip investigated in this study often functions for influence through the evaluation of moral values and religious beliefs, relating them to gossipers' self-perfection.

c) Entertainment:

This function of gossip becomes relevant in friendly contexts where people talk about absent third parties as a means of passing time. As has been explained in Section 2.1., the traditional definition of gossip includes pastime talk about others, which relates to its function as an entertainment tool. Coie et al (2007) define gossip for entertainment as the form of talk behind others to have fun or laugh, by sharing an interesting story. Even prior to this definition, scholars had agreed on the entertainment element in gossip. For instance, Spacks defines gossip as a pleasure giving activity for both the gossip and the gossip hearer (1982). Similarly According to Gelles, narrative gossip meets the emotional needs of the teller (1989). Noon and Delbridge's 1993 study is one of the initial works to address the functions of gossip in organisations and deals with entertainment as a separate issue indicating to the lack of studies in functions of gossip in organisational contexts. Gossip for entertainment is the most common form observed in the data used for this thesis. As the participants are old people whose social activities and contexts are limited to the data collection periods of this study when they gather to have a chat around tea, they tend to talk behind absent parties' backs for entertainment.

To these three functions, some researchers add a fourth one, *friendship* (Saunders, 1999; Percival, 2000; Foster, 2004), which is highly relevant to this study. As it will be discussed in 6.2.3, the participants use gossip as a friendship indicator, sharing private information with 'friends' while keeping it secret from others. It is a two-fold function. The first one is that, as

Blumberg notes, gossip takes place between close friends (1972), and secondly, people strengthen their friendship through the sharing of private information. Therefore, it works top down and bottom up in terms of friendship. Although Blumberg does not mention a gender based result while talking about private gossip's function as a friendship builder, Benwell (2001) later on conducts a study on male magazines, and discusses that male gossip "avoids spheres of private and personal experience" and is only interested in "public knowledge" (p.22) to build close relations between the people with similar interest such as football. This difference in findings points to a difference between genders.

On the issue of building friendship and group membership, Eggins & Slade, (1997) conducted a discourse analytic study where they looked at casual talk at cafes, dinner tables, families, friends etc. where they examined gossip's function as a tool for "establishing and maintaining group membership"; and defined the social role and function of gossip as "a form of talk through which interactants can construct solidarity as they explore shared normative judgements about culturally significant behavioural domains." (p.273). About this same point, an institutional ethnographic study on gossip behaviors of older people is conducted in 2000, by Percival, for which he spent 3 months each in 3 different shelters for the elderly in London. Although his research did not solely focus on functions of gossip, the findings share commonalities with the above listed studies on functions of gossip. His research is based on a triangulated qualitative data collection of observation, informal discussion, individual interviews, and focus groups. He tries to understand the *cultural importance* and *social implications* of gossip with this study. The results show that there is a close relationship between gossip and cultural elements, and between gossip and close friendship. He reported some of the participants' explicit comments about gossip being compulsory for social interaction between tenants, either to form closeness or distance between tenants of the place. He concludes from his findings that:

"Gossip both encourages closeness between tenants and presents good reasons to resist such closeness... Social distancing may therefore be understood as a strategy born of necessity, one that involves dealing with gossip's paradoxical tendencies adopting a stance of living according to social norms and values, while maintaining psychological elbow room." (p.324).

His study successfully illustrates the group dynamics among the elderly affected by gossip, which is also relevant to the observations in this research and earlier ones which listed *influence*,

friendship and *closeness* as important functions of gossip in interaction. Although it uses a different approach to interaction, Percival's findings about gossip's function as a means of building closeness (friendship), and similarly building distance when necessary are also observed in this current study, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 6.

In this section, the literature on the functions of gossip is summarised in a descriptive manner rather than critical, because the findings of all these mentioned studies are supportive to each other, and do not provide any oppositions in terms of the functions gossip takes on in interaction. The findings of this thesis on the functions of gossip is also in line with the above summarised literature, which will be explained in detail in the analysis and discussion chapters.

This section so far has covered the definition, topics and functions of gossip. The next part will take the discussion one step further, and will deal with two of the very important aspects present in gossip talk in the data set used for this thesis, *morality* and *religion*.

2.2.4. Morality-Religion-Gossip

One of the crucial functions of gossip being "to state and reaffirm" the social and moral norms in the society (Bott, 1957: p.254), the concept can easily be connected with morality. When people are being gossiped about, they, in a way, are morally evaluated by the gossiper's own understanding of the social/moral norms of the society. This section will first give a brief definition of morality, and then will cover the relation between these three concepts, in an attempt to form a base for the coming discussion on the presence of religion and morality in gossip talk in the data set used for this thesis.

a) Morality: Definition

"I am a humanist, which means, in part, that I have tried to behave decently
without expectations of rewards or punishments after I am dead."

Kurt Vonnegut (1992)

Morality in its most basic form covers, but is not limited to, the concepts of what is *good-bad*, *right-wrong* in the evaluation of the behaviours, beliefs, lives, etcetera of human beings. This does not necessarily mean that all good versus bad distinctions are about moral concepts, but some are, as will be explained in this section. The term *moral* comes from the Latin word *mores*,

which means “customs and traditions” (Bergmann, 1998: p.282), and later on it got a broader concept than the original meaning. Although some scholars offer definitions for the term morality such as Turiel (1983) who defines the term as “prescriptive judgments of justice, rights, and welfare pertaining to how people ought to relate to each other” (p.3); some others, such as Skorupski (1993), point that the term moral is indefinable in nature, and only a meaning for it can be constructed using the non-moral elements, but not a fully drawn definition.

Acknowledging the troubles with offering a concrete definition for the term, this study accepts the closest definition offered by Haidt’s (2008) functionalist view: “Moral systems are interlocking sets of values, practices, institutions, and evolved psychological mechanisms that work together to suppress or regulate selfishness and make social life possible.” (p.70) Later, the owner of this definition logically connects it to Richerson and Boyd’s (2005) assumption that evolution of human genes and culture is where morality takes its roots from.

A very early study on the elements of morality by Whewell (1864) provides us with a long list of the elements existent in moral domain such as human actions, thoughts, truth and error, laws of nature, the reason, the understanding, the intellect, action, intention, desires etcetera. Of course these can all be the subject of a thesis on their own, and have been discussed by fellow scholars such as Donagan (1974), but this list of relevant elements of morality gives us - the discourse analysts in its broadest term - a general picture of the deep philosophical concept of morality. Haidt et al. (1993) and Shweder et al. (1997) add “ingroup loyalty, authority, respect, and spiritual purity” to the crucial aspects of moral domain listed by Whewell, followed by the addition of “issues related to harm, fairness, and justice” by Hauser (2006) and Wainryb (2006) (cited in Haidt, 2008: p.70).

Having given a brief introduction of the concept of morality mainly from the functionalistic perspective, the following sections will consecutively elaborate on the relationships between morality and gossip, and gossip and religion.

b) Morality and Gossip

Yerkovich (1977) defines the act of gossip as an immoral activity while scholars like Bergmann (1998) focus on the gossip topic’s morality with the words “...when talking about other people, it is hardly possible to avoid expressions that do not somehow or other carry a moral meaning” (p.280). This thesis agrees with both, and accepts that gossip is a (generally) immoral activity

during which people evaluate absent third parties on their (generally) immoral acts. However, it also discusses the questions of ‘immoral according to whom?’ and ‘in what circumstances?’ In other words, what makes an action immoral, what defines the norms? Religion? Individual? These will all be discussed in Chapter 6, following the analysis of the empirical data. Before that, this section provides a brief summary of some research that focus on the relationship between morality and gossip and draw a general picture of the existent situation in literature.

Lipscomb (2011) conducted a study that focuses on the morality and gossip relationship from the perspective that gossip is a tool used to evaluate the gossipee’s deficiency in social/moral norms. In this study, she investigated how women “policed” other’s “behaviour, enforcing a collective morality through gossip, sexual insult and physical confrontation” (p.408). For this historical study, she uses “consistorial records from southern France (specifically, the Languedoc, stretching from Nîmes in the east to Montauban in the west) to explore issues of women’s neighbourliness and sociability, specifically through cases of gossip, insult and violence.” (p.410). As is obvious from the data, this is another female based gossip study, parallel to the common tendency in literature which suggests that gossip is a *female* behaviour. However, the feminist approach is outside the scope of this study as it focuses on the humanist moral approach rather than the religion or gender based ones. The findings of this study suggest that gossip “was not simply driven by malice or amusement. It had serious intent, and expressed women’s disapproval of, and judgement on, the morality of others.” (p.426). and concludes that “gossip gives women a distinctive social role in the town.”(p.408). The findings of Lipscomb’s study show similarities to the findings of this current thesis where participants, who are all female, evaluate absent others based on moral norms.

A very recent study by Peters and Kashima (2015), looks at the morality-gossip relationship from the perspective of *gossiper morality* and *gossip content* relation. In this research, they “examined whether audience perceptions of gossiper morality are influenced by their perceptions that the content of gossip is able to help them regulate their relationships.” (p.784) from a triangulated design where two experimental scenarios and a realistic interaction are analysed. The results of this study indicate that gossiper morality from the perspective of the gossip receiver is formed based on the shared gossip, but not necessarily negative in all cases. When the gossip recipient thinks that the information given through the gossip helps them with their relationships with the gossipee, and serves their own well-being, they get a positive impression

of the gossipers' morality. The gossip hearers are also reported to form their relationship with the gossipers based on real experience of hearing them talk about others, and this helps them maintain the group dynamics. The study concludes that gossip regulates the group life by boosting "intra-group cooperation" (p.795). This study supports the functionalistic view of the concept of gossip, and shows that when used for information transfer in a pragmatic sense, gossip is not considered immoral by the receiver; or if considered immoral, it still helps the receiver with his/her relationship with the gossipers. This study is a well-designed experiment to show the two-facet nature of the gossip phenomenon in social groups which is also observed in the data set used for this thesis.

These studies on gossip and morality are relevant to this current research in that their findings have many common points with the data analysed for this research, together with a few differences which are mostly because of the cultural and societal differences which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

c) Religion and Gossip

Finally, it is worth briefly noting here that gossip is not regarded as an acceptable behaviour in most religions (eg. "Whoever spreads gossip betrays confidences; so don't get involved with someone who talks too much. or He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip. (being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents.)" from Bible- International Standard Version or "Don't gossip about each other!" from Hucurat 12/Quran). This section briefly touches on this but does not go into the details of either theoretical assumptions of the religions on the issue or the debate between the theoretical and moral perspectives on gossip, because of the focus of this research being different to theological studies and they require a different expertise than the one of the researcher. However, it is mentioned because the participants make explicit comments on the *wrongfulness* of the act of gossiping according to their religious beliefs in the data while evaluating others' behaviour based on their understandings on social/cultural (religious in our case, because of the modernisation level of the society, suggested by Luckmann, 1967) norms. This will be discussed in more detail from a micro-analytic data-driven perspective in Section 6.3.

Having given a brief overview of the studies on the relationship between gossip, morality, and religion, we can claim that none of the discourse studies on morality, as far as the literature research in various databases provided, seems to have investigated gossip, which is done in this study. The next section narrows its focus to the gossip studies in the specific context of this thesis, i.e. Turkey.

2.2.5. Gossip Studies in Turkey

Gossip is one of the most common forms of talk in Turkey too. In talk, the term gossip has more than one translation to Turkish which are *dedikodu*, *kov*, *gıybet*, *cekiştirme* with almost no difference in meaning. All of these words that have the same meaning (i.e. gossip) are used by the participants of this study as will be referred to later in Chapters 5 and 6. In her descriptive study, Solmaz (2006) focuses on the information gathering/sharing function of the concept and its role as a communication initiator or ender in social interactions in institutions. Despite being a literary review paper, it is obviously limited in content as it fails to mention even the most important names in the area. She concludes her study with a suggestion for the institutions, that although gossip is a successful way of information transfer, people should be careful about the malicious effects it can create. However, the paper is not explanatory and is not dependent on data. Another more recent study by Arabaci et al. (2012) looks at the conceptions of teachers about gossip and rumour by applying a qualitative data collection method (i.e. interview). It aims to first analyse the teachers' perceptions of gossip and their feelings when they are subject of gossip. The results indicate that the participants have negative perceptions about gossip and feel sad and annoyed when gossiped about. However, besides being close to this current study at hand, as it has teachers as participants too, this study fails to address the differences between perceptions about gossip vs the actual gossip behaviour which will be shown in this thesis. The second group of researchers in Turkey look at the mediated gossip where the gossip is made on television or internet, not face to face. Karahan conducts a textual analysis and critical discourse analysis of the gossip columns in Turkish daily newspapers. She discusses the cultural and social norm-preserving roles column writer undertakes the same way as a gossip in conversations does (2006). Similarly, Kocabay (2007) looks for answers to the question of "what is the role of information sharing forums on the internet in delivering, replication and spreading

of gossip (p.121). A good example of this type of mediated gossip studies is Cayli's master thesis on gossip on Turkish TV channels (2008). She analyses the visual and communicational elements in news and entertainment programmes on mainstream TV channels and uses critical discourse analysis as a method to investigate the gossip behaviours from a feminist perspective. She questions the political aspect of gossip, and compares the traditional forms of gossip with mediated versions.

Although there are various studies on gossip, a deep investigation of the literature points out that the concept of gossip has not attracted enough interest among the Turkish scholars. Especially the structural organisation of gossip is a totally underexplored area. Therefore, this thesis, investigating both the structural organisation of gossip in micro detail with specific attention to gossip initiation, recipient's response, and gossip ending; and the topics of gossip in Turkish context adds to the literature from two dimensions: structural and contextual, in contrast to the one sided focus in existing studies with insufficient emphasis on the topicality.

2.3. Interactional Research on Gossip

Gossip being one of the most common forms of interaction, it becomes compulsory for this thesis to handle the literature on interactional research on gossip, before moving on to further details of the research method and data. The previous sections of this chapter have described the literature related to the gossip content, focusing on the cognitive, quantitative, and experimental studies on it. The studies reviewed so far show that the interactional organisation of gossip is an underexplored area. This section builds onto that research body of quantitative experimental studies with the very few conversation analytic studies that looked at the structural organisation of gossip. It is necessary to look at the structural organisation of gossip because gossip is a form of real talk, and it is necessary to look at real life data in order to understand the conversational dynamics in gossip.

Starting with Goodwin (1980), some studies on gossip have focused on the structural organisation of gossip talk in either institutional or informal social settings. Goodwin highlights the importance of the gossip talk itself, and looks at the details of it in terms of the structural organisation of it. He attempts to analyse the cultural elements used by black female children to organise a multistage speech event, a form of gossip and does this through a specification of utterances that develop the activity with detailed investigation of participants and their actions.

Another such micro-analytic study focusing on “information withholding as a manipulative and collusive strategy in gossip” uses a similar methodology to the one of this thesis, a micro analysis of the structural organisation of gossip sequences (Besnier, 1989: p.315). This study by Besnier does not focus solely on gossip topics, but mentions them aside its main finding that gossip initiators withhold information to maintain their power over the gossip hearer, before revealing the gossip. Its sub-findings list the subjects and topics of gossip as actions of absent parties, everyday events, scandalous events, teasing, and different-sex siblings. Besnier’s study shares similarities with the results of this thesis in that the topics of gossip in a Polynesian atoll of the central pacific are highly similar to the ones in an old people’s home in Turkey, which can be an indicator of the globalism of gossip, and its independence from geographical distances/differences. (See Section 6.2.1. for a further discussion on this.)

One of the primary sources for the structural organisation of gossip is Bergmann’s (1993) work where he discusses the social organisation of gossip from the same ethnomethodological perspective as this current study, in a totally different cultural/social context, and in non-institutional casual talk (Section 2.3.1 will provide a brief discussion on institutionality of talk). It focuses on gossip because gossip is one of the most commonly used genres of talk by millions of people both face-to-face and on the phone. The goal of this detailed gossip in interaction study is stated as to describe gossip as a separate form of everyday talk, and it aims to analyze the internal structures and external social factors that affect gossip.

The results of the contextual analysis of the data point to four functions of gossip which are “gossip as a means of social control, gossip as a mechanism of preserving social groups, gossip as a technique of information management, gossip as the social form of discreet indiscretion” (p.139). These functions about maintaining social balance and information management support the functionalistic view on gossip shared by Stirling (1956), Gluckmann (1963), Rosnow (1977), which have been discussed in Section 2.2.3. Apart from these contextual findings, the results of the sequential organization of gossip focus on seven interactional patterns which are listed as:

- 1- Gossip is situationally embedded
- 2- Gossip is interactively secured
- 3- Gossip is proposed/introduced in certain ways
- 4- Gossip is told in certain linguistic styles
- 5- Gossip information is presented in a reconstructive way

6- Morality and social typing are present in gossip

7- The termination of gossip is an interactive problem (Bergmann, 1993).

This study by Bergmann is of crucial importance for this thesis because some of these features are also observed in the data of this thesis as well, and others are not. These similarities and differences, and possible explanations to them, will be discussed in Chapter 6, following data analysis in Chapters 4 and 5.

An early study that investigated the gossip phenomenon among the elderly is conducted by Saunders (1999). In this study, she follows the pathway of the earlier micro-analytic studies by Goodwin (1980), Besnier (1989), and Bergmann (1993). Her study focuses on old women's support group meetings, and looks at the overlaps and questions to define the functions gossip has in this context. The results indicate that gossip among older women has two functions: the first one is information transfer, and the second one is reinforcement of social norms. While coming up with these functions, she also focuses on the behaviours that establish solidarity by providing an overview of how gossip creates group cohesiveness and feelings of solidarity. In this study, she observes that the most common topics of gossip are *fashion, dating, sex, and problems of living*, which have some commonalities and total differences with the results of this current thesis. The reasons behind these similarities and differences are discussed in the discussion section relating them to the contextual similarities and differences between the two studies.

Another interactional study on gossip in casual talk was conducted by Blum-Kulka in 2000. For this study, she examined two dinner conversations from ten Israeli and ten Jewish families in their homes in America and Israel. The study asks "what children might learn from participating in a multiplicity of forms of narration about others during dinner conversations." (p.215). The results of the study indicate that the findings are parallel to Bergmann's (1993) in that gossip has three main features which are "acquaintance, absence and privacy" (p.237). Furthermore, she concludes that "Precisely because alliances and affiliations in gossipy talk in the family may cut across age lines, the genre offers children a rare opportunity for full participation in multi-party, intergenerational discourse forms." (p.238). The findings of Blum-Kulka's study is important in that it has a relatively different age group as participants (children) when compared to the participants in this thesis (elderly). This discussion will be deepened in the discussion chapter of this thesis.

The latest Conversation Analytic study that investigates the phenomenon of gossip, to my knowledge, is by Parker and O'Reilly, where they discuss gossip as a social action in the presence and absence of children in family therapy sessions (2012). The aim of the study is "to explore the process of social positioning between parents and children within a family therapy context." (p.459). Their findings discuss that although it is thought that including the children in the therapy sessions is problematic because of the parents talking negatively about their children, it also appears to have advantages for it allows the parent and child to work together, and build a better relationship. As it is obvious from the findings' institutional nature, this research is slightly different from the previous ones because it focuses on the gossip in institutional talk, therapy sessions in this case, and aims to give insight to the institution whether to include children or not in the sessions. Therefore, although gossip is generally referred to as a genre of casual talk, as has been done by the previously mentioned interactional studies before Parker and O'Reilly, it can also occur in institutional settings such as hospitals, schools, old people's homes or any institution. The consideration on that point is that can all talk in institutions be labelled as institutional talk, or is it necessary for any institutional conversation to occur in an institution or can it be anywhere? This blurry concepts of institutionality, non-institutionality, and elderly homes as institutions will be discussed in the next section to build a basis for the later discussion on the institutionality/non-institutionality of gossip talk in old people's home.

The Conversation Analytic studies are virtually limited to these few studies because of the conflict between the private nature of gossip and the real interaction-based data necessary for such studies. Most scholars tend to use either experimental research design where they measure the quantification of gossip, or interview based design which investigate people's *attitude* toward gossip. Of course they both have their contributions to the field, but the lack of emic research on the area makes this current study of importance for the body of research on gossip. Also within the conversation analytic studies of gossip, with its unique context and the range of participants and the results, this study can be seen as a gap filler.

Having drawn the general borderlines of elderly research and gossip research and linking them both to the gap that needs to be filled in the area, the final section of the literature review will briefly outline the principles of institutional talk, and link it to the context of this thesis where necessary.

2.3.1. Institutional/Non-institutional Talk

Throughout this literature review, first, literature on elderly research has been introduced, then, literature on gossip studies has been described, and finally, the CA studies on gossip have been summarised. The introduction of the latest CA study on gossip by Parker and O'Reilly (2012) has brought about the discussion of institutionality vs non-institutionality of talk. In this final section, institutional talk will be briefly introduced, and the institutionality of old people's homes will be evaluated based on the teachings of CA in order for the researcher to refer back to during the analysis and discussion of the data used for this thesis.

Early CA researchers who studied conversations of all types did not explicitly differentiate talk as institutional or non-institutional until Atkinson and Drew's (1979) research on courtroom interactions. The scholars who work on interaction in institutional contexts agree that it is not possible to provide a full definition for the term (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage & Clayman, 2010) because of "indefinitude of institutional contexts" (Arminen, 2005: p.35). Although institutional talk, at first, sounds like the type of talk that takes place in certain forms in certain institutional contexts, research has shown that this is not such a clear-cut concept (Drew & Heritage, 1992). On the contrary "institutional talk can occur anywhere, and by the same token, the ordinary conversation can emerge in almost any institutional context." (Heritage & Clayman, 2010: p.35). For example, a family dinner can turn into an appropriate context for institutional talk depending on the roles of the participants, tasks accomplished through talk, and the identities of the parties in conversation (Schegloff, 1991).

Although it is true that it is not possible to draw sharp lines for the definition of the term *institutional talk*, I will still try to give an insight into the concept agreeing with Heritage and Clayman's (2010) statement that "even fuzzy boundaries can be extremely useful." (p35). Instead of trying to provide a full detailed definition for the term, which is not possible as has been discussed so far, this section will try to point to the differences between institutional and non-institutional/casual talk. Casual talk is briefly defined as "form of interaction that is not confined to specialised settings or to the execution of particular tasks" (Heritage, 1998: p.2), and, accordingly, there are three characteristics that differ institutional talk from casual talk which are (1) the aims of the participants are specific to institutional goals, (2) there are specific constraints to what is allowable for the business at talk, and (3) there are specific inferential frameworks in institutional contexts (Levinson, 1992; Drew & Heritage, 1992: p.22).

Apart from these contextual restrictions which define the institutionality of talk, the differentiation of ordinary conversation and institutional talk is arbitrary and unmotivated (McHoul & Rapley, 2001). It can only be differentiated if there are explicit clues in the talk itself, rather than depending strictly on pre-determined contextual elements. One such clue is the in-talk relevant identities brought to talk by the participants themselves. As Drew and Heritage (1992) put it, a piece of talk can be labelled “institutional” as long as “participants' institutional or professional identities are somehow made relevant to the work activities in which they are engaged” (p.3-4). One participant can use various institutional/social identities, and can move between casual and institutional talk in a single encounter. (Heritage, 2005: p.107). This feature of interchangeability between institutional and casual identities, and between institutional and casual talk, is relevant for the data set used for this thesis because the same principle applies to the current data where the presence of a member of staff, or another institutional identity, can totally change the nature of the talk from casual to strictly institutional (See Chapters 4, 5 & 6). Together with the institutional identities of the participants, another important aspect present in this current study is the incidents when an institutional rule is made relevant in casual talk. As will be exemplified in the data analysis, sometimes, casual talk can turn into institutional talk upon the mentioning of an institutional rule that changes the nature of talk.

Studying ordinary talk in a definite context (e.g. old people's home) can reveal crucial structural facts about the institutional talk in that same context, as will be the case in this study which focuses on ordinary talk and thus understands the nature of talk in the institution itself in a more general sense. Raymond (1996) explains that one needs to truly interpret the structure of casual conversations and analyse the effect of the institutional context on the use of language if s/he wants to understand the nature of institutional conversations (p.20). Moreover, as has been discussed in this section, it is not possible to make a “hard and fast distinction” (Drew & Heritage, 1992: p.21) between the institutional and non-institutional parts of talk in the data set used for this thesis. In this respect, the type of data used for this research will be referred to as *semi-institutional*, referring to the interconnectedness and inter-presence of institutional and non-institutional talk closely together in the same pieces of talk, even changing from one line to the next one. It is identified as ‘semi-institutional’ because the institution is the only living area for the participants of this study who do not have a separate social life, but live their non-institutional lives within the boundaries of an institution. It is important to study semi-

institutional talk in old people's homes because, as has been explained in detail in the first half of this chapter, elderly research so far has either focused on institutional research on elderly-care giver institutional interaction, or elderly-elderly casual interaction. However, this specific study attempts to open a new window by looking at how elderly interact non-institutionally in an institutional context, and how do the two types of talk (i.e. institutional and casual), get so interwoven within a highly casual social activity (i.e gossip).

2.4. Summary

Throughout this chapter, I have first summarised the literature on elderly research focusing on old people's homes, elderly interaction research, and old people's home as a Community of Practice. Following the elderly research, the second section has focused on the gossip phenomena. This section has introduced the etymological origins and definition of gossip, topics of gossip, functions of gossip, morality and religion's relation to gossip, and gossip studies conducted in the specific context of this research (Turkey). The final section of the literature has focused on the interactional, namely conversation analytic studies, ending with a brief introduction to institutionality in conversations. The next chapter will cover the methodology used for this thesis, together with the research design and procedures.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.0. Introduction

This chapter will explain the overall procedure of data collection and the method of analysis used in this study. The purpose of the study is stated in the first part of this chapter together with a list of the research question. Then follows a detailed description of the participants who took part at the research and the nature of the context where the data was gathered. The next section is a summary of the process of gaining access to the research context and getting the ethical permissions at official and individual levels. Once the ethics is covered, the data collection procedure and the composition of the data will be presented. Data collection is followed by a section on transcription and translation processes carried out on the selected parts of the data. After the preparation steps of data is finished, the actual analysis phase, conversation analysis as the exclusive method of analysis in this research is described in its basics. Following the method of analysis are two successive subtopics, reliability and validity, with their application to the study in question in this thesis. Lastly, the limitations of the study are acknowledged.

3.1. Research Design

3.1.1. Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The primary aim of this research is to closely investigate the characteristics of the communication between the elderly people in an old people's home in Turkey. The narrower focus of this specific study is the structure of the gossip sequences in the mentioned context. As has been explained in detail in the previous chapter on literature, the term gossip here is used to refer to the "evaluative comments about someone who is not present in the conversation" (Foster, 2004: p.78). For this study at hand, the point is when gossip occurs in a conversation, how the participants initiate the gossip sequence, how others contribute and build on the initiation, if they do at all; or if not, how they close the sequence and change the topic instead of contributing to it. The uniqueness of this study originates from the fact that naturally occurring gossip talk in this type of context has not yet been addressed by many previous studies. In this respect, this study is the one of the very few ethnographic CA studies to investigate the nature of gossip in old people's homes, and the first one in Turkish context. To scrutinize the mentioned conflictual phenomena, this micro-analytic research project is designed to ask 3 main 4 sub-

questions to the data set collected from an old people's home (see Sections 3.1.2. & 3.1.4. for detailed information on data and the context). They are:

- 1- How is gossip sequentially organised?
 - a) How does the gossip initiate it?
 - b) How do the participants orient to conversations on the 'negative' evaluation of other people?
 - c) How do the participants of the talk position themselves to the gossip? How do they reflect their positive, negative or neutral evaluations?
 - d) How is the gossip ended?
- 2- What are the most common topics of gossip?
- 3- What are the common contextual features in gossip talk?

This research seeks answer to these questions in the data whose collection procedures, content, and analysis method are explained in detail in the following sections of this chapter.

3.1.2. Participants and Context

To match with the aforementioned aim of investigating the structure of gossip sequences in old people's interaction, the participants are mainly the residents of an old people's home in Turkey. These participants are accompanied by 36 students who were serving their internship at the institution while this research was taking place, their lecturer from the university, two other teachers assigned to the institution by the government to teach the women residents how to do handicraft as part of a social rehabilitation project held in all old people's homes in Turkey.

The first group of participants for this research are the 53 residents of the home. Although the concept of being *old* is a highly disputed issue among social researchers (Freund & Smith, 1999 discuss the concept in depth and also compare the outsider perception of old age with people's own definition of their old age), this study considers all the residents, aged between 57 to 83, as old people based on the fact that they stay at an old people's home. Of these 53 residents, 30 are males and 23 are females. Four of them are married (2 couples), sharing the room with their spouses (on the female floor) and the rest are single, either divorced or widow/ers. 44 of the residents have children while 9 never had any children even though they were all married at some point in their lives. This information is relevant here because this fact affects their attitude towards their current lifestyle. The residents who do not have any children have a relatively

positive attitude towards the idea of *having to* (this is how they all express it) stay at an old people's home at *the last stage of their lives* compared to the ones with children, who reported feeling *abandoned* by them.

Preferably, the participants in a CA research are not separately described for their gender differences until it is made relevant in the talk by the interactants themselves, but in this context, the residents are described in a separated manner because they stay on different floors of the same building, which makes separated gender descriptions necessary for this study and data set to become clearer in readers' minds. All of the 23 female residents who are healthy and able to communicate, agreed to participate in this research. However, 2 out of the 32 males did not give consent to actively participating in the research although they acknowledged and approved of the researcher's presence in the institution. The fact that they were both members of an isolated, incommunicative group made it easier in terms of ethics, for it meant there was no need to consider non-consented talk.

Related to the existence of isolated individuals, one important point to be noted here is that, despite the large number of agreement on participation from the residents, a small number of them turned out to be active parties in conversations while the rest either sat isolated from the main body of communicative group, or did not participate in the conversations even if they were sitting with an actively interacting group. The initial concern about them, particularly when they kept silent within a conversation, was the Observer's Paradox, described by Labov (1972) as the restriction in the production of language because of an observer's presence in the context while systematically observing and recording language use (cited in Murphy, 2010: p.33). As the term itself explains, having totally silent participants conjured up the idea that it was caused by the sight of the voice-recording device on the table. However, investigations with the staff and ethnographic observations in the institution brought out the fact that silence was their usual role in the group. They were doing being themselves, not something extraordinary, as would be desired from the naturally occurring data required for this research.

Having explained the main participants for this research, it should be noted here that, because of practical reasons (i.e. wordcount and limits of this thesis), only half of the data (which covers the 53 hours of recordings collected on the women's part of the institution) has been used for this thesis. The rest of the recordings (the ones collected on men's floor) will be used for another study. In this research, although most of the conversations are between female residents

themselves, there are some mixed gender conversations because of the existence of a few male staff members, the male intern students, and one male resident (who will be referred to as MUS in Chapter 4) staying on women's floor with his wife. Considering the existence of aforementioned male participants in recorded conversations, this thesis does not discuss gossip in relation to its gender relevant properties.

Apart from the residents who are the main focus in this emic research, there are two other group of participants in the data who happened to interact with them during the recordings. The first group is the two handicraft teachers who are assigned to the institute as part of a social rehabilitation project. They are there every afternoon and have knitting classes on the women's floor only, and some of the recordings in this data set are gathered from these classes. Another group of outsider participants are final year university students who are studying BA in Elderly Care and Rehabilitation. They visit the institute two days a week to do their internship. They organise social activities such as drawing, painting, jewellery making etc., and the interaction in these activities are also in the data. (See Table 1 for a summary of the participant profile):

1 st Group: Residents	2nd Group: Handicraft Teachers	3rd Group: Intern Students
30 Males 23 Females	2 Females	7 Males 12 Females

Table 1: Data Profile

Together with the participants, another important concept in any social research is the context. However, it should be noted here that what is meant by context here is the physical context of the place, not the “dynamic construct which is interactionally organised in and through the process of communication” as has been described by Fetzer (in eds. Tanskanen et al, 2010: p.16). This ethnomethodological perspective of the term is of course relevant to this study, however will be examined in the analysis chapter of this thesis when made relevant by the participants within the interaction. This section is only reserved to the physical context where the data collection took place. The data set used for this research is collected from a small Central Anatolian city. This anonymous city is chosen first because of its resemblance to the social structure of most of the

cities in the country, and second its ease of access to the researcher, being her hometown. Apart from three, all the residents are from the same city where the institution is located.¹

The social features of the larger context put aside, which will be expanded in more detail when it becomes relevant within the real interaction pieces, this section briefly describes the physical features of the institution building and the settlement of the residents in the building. The place is a quadruplex one, basement and ground floors reserved to the official duties and staff rooms. The recordings are gathered from the remaining two, 1st men's floor and the 2nd women's floors. As stated earlier in this chapter, male and female residents stay on different floors. The recordings took place in these common spaces at 10:00 am and 02:00 pm and each recording session lasted about 45-60 minutes. Further details of the recording timetable and the total amount of data collected are explained in 3.4. Data Collection section, after the access to the place and the ethics issues are covered.

3.1.3. Access and Ethics

Obtaining the permissions for data collection process started with the university's ethical committee. The focus of the study being a sensitive group of people, the ethical committee behaved hypercritically regarding the application process. The members were convinced of the feasibility of the research after a few months' correspondence through email, and detailed considerations of each step to be taken throughout the research. They checked and approved three separate consent forms prepared for the ministry (Appendix A), the institution (Appendix B) and then the individual participants (Appendix C), together with an information sheet (Appendix D) that provided detailed information about the research process as Heath et al. (2010) suggest for researchers.

After the university ethical committee's approval of the designed project, official permission from the Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Politics was required next. This was part of the bureaucratic process as the institution in question is a government agency. I made a personal application for the consent with the previously agreed forms in September 2013. After 2 months' waiting time for hierarchical procedures to be applied, the ministry supplied a consent with the

¹ It should be noted here that the law has a definite placement policy which asserts that everyone should stay in the institution located in their city of birth upon application for a placement in an old people's home, if there is not an exceptional case

explicit statements for the consent being only “for questionnaires” and “no audio or video recordings allowed”. As a result of this crucial difference between the request and what was offered in return, a second application became necessary. Following another month’s delay, the project was approved enabling “audio only recordings”. This limited permission was based on the ministry regulations which did not allow recordings in any institutions by any means, this study is an exception in this context with its audio recorded data. After a brief consideration of the new situation and the compulsory changes to the nature of the data, my supervisors and I agreed that it would still be a significant study, the limitations acknowledged.

The third step of gathering consents is the one from the institution itself. It was the most straightforward level of the process. First because the managers took what the ministry office consented as a kind of imperative in their part. Second, they were friendly and open to new people in their institution. Last but not least, they knew that their institution was an unproblematic place where they do not have anything to keep back from an outsider. After the institutional consent, the final consent was concerned about the individuals who would participate in the research. Ethics has always been an issue in this kind of emic research, where real life recordings are used as one and only data source. The idea of considering the wellbeing of all the participants and getting their consents to participate in research is a compulsory element in scientific research. As has been previously explained, the ethical frame for this research context was built as a result of meticulous considerations with the ethical committee of the university.

One of the issues prioritized in these negotiations was that the participants need to be informed thoroughly about the details of the research and data collection process. In this respect, all the participants were supplied with an information sheet (See Appendix D) which covered the issues of “what the study is about”, “what the participants will be asked to do”, “risks and benefits of participation”, “the confidentiality of the data”, “voluntary participation” and the essential “contact details” in case of need after the data collection process is over, and a need may occur to contact the researcher or the university about withdrawing from the project, or any concern or question about the use of the data.

After this consideration of the ethical issues from an outsider’s perspective, the mentioned ethical considerations were put into practice with the start of the data collection. Once all the participants were informed thoroughly about the project and what they can do if they do not want

to keep participating or if they have a problem with a recorded conversation, the data collection progressed without any crucial concerns. Only once, one of the participants asked for destruction of a conversation that they did not want to be used for the research. Upon the request, in accordance with the suggestion “when identified or potentially identifiable data are used in a study, the information must not be used in a way that causes disadvantage to any participant.” by National Ethics Advisory Committee (2012), the recorder on that table was turned off immediately and the recorded part deleted. The second voice recorder on the other table was also turned off and erased similarly. Apart from this incident, no other ethical issues arose during data collection process or afterwards.

3.1.4. Data Collection

The data collection process was scheduled in 8 weeks over December 2013 and January 2014 (see Appendix E for the data collection schedule). This timetable shows the original schedule agreed and signed both by the institution and the researcher. The highlighted periods are when there was no recording due to external factors. Apart from these periods, recordings took place in every session, even though they may vary in length of time, quality of sound and the amount of interactions or silences within them. The first week in the institution (which is not documented in the given table) functioned as an induction week for both the researcher and the participants. This was a fundamental part of the process because I would be present in the institution like a full time employee for the next two months. At the same time as meeting with the people during this first week, I also collected the consent forms. This first week served the research crucially, giving us the chance to get our acquaintanceship to a friendly and warm level, which eased things for the rest of the data collection period.

The managers of the institution offered me a full-time office for use during these two months of data collection. It made it possible for me to stay there from morning till evening like a regular staff member, instead of being present in the building only during the recording hours. Although I was not in the common area while the recordings took place, because of the main nature of recordings being naturally occurring and not led by me, my full time presence in the building guaranteed that the participants could contact me whenever they needed/wanted. This also made it possible for both parties to build close relationships, which reduced the observer’s paradox that was initially more visible (i.e. audible) in the recordings. Moreover, it gave me as the analyst a

chance to understand the social and interactional dynamics of the place and people, which contributed to the analysis of the data when these are made relevant by the participants in a given piece of interaction.

The overall output of this data collection process is a total of approximately 100 hours of raw audio data. It was collected from the common rooms during the tea times in the morning and afternoon. One table on each the male and female floors is recorded with two audio recorders to guarantee the sound quality to make better analysis possible. Considering the limitation that the data is audio-only (see next section for explanation on audio data), it is not uncommon to hear noisy recordings or total silences. So the raw collection is kept long in hours to ensure enough amount of good quality recordings for analysis. Having described the data-set used for this study, the next section will briefly discuss the use of audio only data.

3.1.5. Audio Data

As has been explained in Section 3.1.3. on Access and Ethics, the initial idea for this project was to collect video data that would allow the analysis of both verbal and non-verbal elements of the interaction within the given context of old people's home, which, accordingly, would give a deeper insight into what is happening in naturally occurring face-to-face encounters amongst the residents of the home. However, it ended up being solely dependant on audio-only data because of the previously explained ethical and practical reasons. Although Conversation Analysis (see Section 3.2 for a detailed explanation of theoretical and practical sides of Conversation Analysis) as a social research method that looks closely at human interaction initially started looking at audio only recordings of telephone conversations (Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 1992), the improvements in technology enabled the researchers to collect and analyse data from multi-dimensions including the findings from the analysis of video data. (Goodwin, 1981; Schegloff, 1984; Heath, 1984). Having video data is a very important aspect for the analysis of face-to-face conversations because of the fact that the nonverbal elements also play an important role in the meaning making processes of conversations. While discussing the necessity of the video recordings, Mondada (2006) describes the data collection period as a means of respecting the naturalistic orientation, requiring that participants' activities be observed in their natural social contexts, in interactions which have not been guided by the researcher, which would have taken place even if s/he was absent – but which represent people's ordinary lives, and highlights the

importance of having video data together with audio in order for the researcher to maintain this concept of naturalistic orientation to naturally occurring data. Goodwin (1981) is one of the earliest examples to the Conversation Analysis studies that use visual data together with the audio one, and it clearly shows how much impact multimodal data has on a study and its contributions to the field. Similarly, as an example to a relatively recent CA study 30 years after Goodwin, Sert (2011) looked at the multimodal elements in students' claims of insufficient knowledge by analysing the video-recorded conversations from classrooms, and its findings contribute to the area significantly, adding a multi-dimensional analysis.

Although it is claimed by some recent CA work that video recordings are compulsory for analysis, I would argue with that on the strength of ten Have's explanation to the situation. In his book on CA, ten Have (2007) discusses that although video recordings contributed a lot to the field of CA, the initial emergence of it was enabled by the audio technology. However, the videos did not make a very big change in the field, just added more detail to the existing audio recordings. "Video analysis has been mostly used in a complementary fashion to audio-based CA." (p.8). This quote should not be misinterpreted as meaning that video recordings are not necessary, but it means, acknowledging that the data has limitations in terms of inclusiveness, the study and many others (e.g. Hata 2016) still show that it is possible to analyse the nature of interaction and the sequential organisation of the talk in the given context, and to contributions to the field, using audio only data. Therefore, as has been discussed and explicitly acknowledged in this section, the richer the data is, the better the analysis is. However, this fact that multi faceted data gives the researcher more insight into what is happening in the conversation does not always find its equivalent in practical terms. Even without visuals, various studies, such as Leyland (2014), have made important contributions to the field. Similarly, in this case, the researcher was not permitted to collect video data because of the rules of the institution. Accepting this limitation, the main argument for this current study is that 'audio only data is always better than no data', as this research in this specific context would not otherwise be possible at all. On this domain, although video is a good addition to research, audio only research still has a lot to contribute to the field as has been shown by many studies conducted on audio only data up till now.

This limitation of the data being audio-only caused some problems during the data analysis. There were some blurry areas in recordings where the researcher could not be 100% sure of what is going on because of lack of visuals. In those cases where audio only data did not give enough insights for the analysis in the following analysis chapters, the researcher will refer back to this section acknowledging the limitation, and will still list all the possible analysis which can not be told for sure. However, it should be noted here as a final summarising point for this section that, together with its limitation to audio only nature, the data collected/analysed for this study still offers a significant addition to the area, which will find its place in the following analysis and discussion chapters.

3.1.6. Transcription and Translation

As has been briefly introduced at the end of the previous section, not all of the recorded hours are analysed, but, only the extracts that include the phenomenon that is of interest for this study were transcribed. For determining the phenomenon and selection of the extracts, the recordings collected during the first week were listened to with an “unmotivated” look (Psathas, 1995: p.45) as an initial step, and all the possible focus points were listed. These points that the participants talked about were health matters, being lonely, old times when they were young, and religious discussions or information exchange. After a second closer look at the instances of possibly focusable phenomena, ‘gossip sequences’ came up as the main interest for the research. I picked this specific focus point for my thesis because the systematicity in the sequential organisation of gossip starting from the initiation of it till the closing sequences seemed highly interesting, and a quick review of literature pointed to a possible gap in research on the sequential organisation of gossip in mundane talk.

Following the identification of ‘gossip sequences’ as the research focus, all the pieces of interaction where marked instances of this phenomena occur were selected from the whole data set. As it can be easily guessed when the nature of mundane talk is considered, the process of extract selection was not a straightforward one. The initial recognition of extracts, and grouping them as ‘gossip’ was problematic first because of the broad definition of gossip (see discussion on gossip definition in Literature Review Chapter), and second because of the multifunctional nature of talk where a piece of talk can do more than one action. In order to overcome this problem, the initial decision was to limit the scope of the study only to the evaluative talk about

an absent party, excluding the neutral talk about absent third parties. Even within the evaluative-only gossip, it was hard to decide when and how a piece of interaction becomes evaluative. In this respect, the recordings where the problematic extracts were present were listened from the very beginning to the end to search for clues about the overall content of talk, and then they were included in the collection. If the researcher was not 100% sure about an extract, or the recording was not very clear, that extract was omitted to keep the quality of the data at a high standard, and to maintain the validity of the research. Once a collection was built from the gossip sequences in the recordings, the transcription and translation of these extracts followed.

As it currently remains impossible to include audio/video recordings in a text based thesis, an alternative representation of data is necessary. Transcription system makes it possible to characterise the details of everyday interaction in a detailed manner, taking production of speech and the organisation of turn taking as the central point. (Wooffitt, 2005: p.13). For this study, the widely accepted transcription convention system developed by Gail Jefferson (See Appendix F) is used as a reference resource. Although it may be argued that transcription conventions require the readers to have a prior common sense of the symbols and what they stand for; the convention symbols list provided in appendices helps them comprehend the interaction analysed for the study with ease. Before going through the details of the transcription process, it should be noted here that at all levels of data collection (i.e. recording, transcription, and translation where relevant) it is inevitable that there will be absent details from the original interaction. This point will be discussed in more detail in the limitations section of this chapter.

The first crucial issue in the transcription phase is the decision of what to include and what to exclude while transferring audio data to written form, how much detail is needed, what is relevant for the analysis and what is not. The main principle here is to be as accurate as possible and include as much detail as possible. Transcribing every single detail in the interaction is not a realistic aim. Correspondingly, the analysis for this study will be made from the original recordings, referring to transcripts only as a secondary source to see micro details in static form. The analysis of the data set compiled for this study is based on the original recordings which are in Turkish, the detailed transcriptions and their translation are prepared in the following steps to enable the readers to check the validity of the researcher's analysis. The data being in my first language makes the analysis and interpretation of what is said and how it is responded to easier.

From the data collected, only the recordings on the female floor was used for this research because of (1) limits of this current study, (2) limited interaction in the male floor, and (3) the lack of audio quality in male's floor as they didn't sit close together the way female participants did. From those female recordings, 92 extracts are selected. These extracts are the parts of conversation where instances of gossip occur, from initiation to the end of the sequence. Throughout the transcription of the data, Jenks' (2011) book on "Transcribing Talk in Interaction" is used as a guide reference.

a) Transcription and Translation of Non-English Data

Jenks (2011), as the main source of reference for the transcription process of this study, suggests that "when presenting transcripts comprising a language that is not spoken or understood by the intended audience, it is customary to provide at least one translation" (p.99). From this perspective, the data collected for this research being between L1 Turkish speakers, the transcriptions needed to be translated to English accurately. On the translation of the non-English data, the three line layout suggested by Gumperz and Berenz (1993) is used with, first orthographic transcription of the interaction in its original language (Turkish) as it occurs in talk, second literal (morpheme by morpheme) translation from Turkish to English, and finally free gloss including idiomatic translation. See the example below:

```
LUT  :[simdikiler      laf dinlemediyo ki
      new generation obey/neg
      "The new generation doesn't obey."
      (1.0)
KAD  :dogrudur. ((leaves))
      allright.
```

The first part of the transcription is the orthographic transcription in the original language, Turkish in this context. The interaction is put into text exactly the way it naturally occurs, with the dialect spoken by most of the residents in the institution. The orthographic transcription also includes the details of sound shifts, intonations, changes in talking speed, silences etc. to the extent it is possible to capture from what has been recorded.

After the original interaction is orthographically transcribed, a literal translation comes in the next line in bold prints. Word to word translation from Turkish to English is quite a problematic task for two reasons: 1) Turkish sentence structure (SOV) is different from the one of the target language (SVO), 2) It is not always possible to find an English equivalent for every single word in Turkish because of cultural and social differences which are visible in the two languages as well. Sometimes even when a literal translation is available, the pragmatic meaning it embodies might be different from what the translated version means in the other language. This same problem about “how to deal with the different structures of the languages being transcribed so that the translation does not distort the original interaction” (p.45) is also addressed by Liddicoat (2007). He also discusses that “the problem becomes even greater where the languages involved are substantially different” (p.46).

In order to overcome this and many other possible obstacles to full comprehension of the interaction, a third level of transcription is available for the reader, a free gloss coded in italics. Free gloss is another form of translation, however in contradistinction to the formerly mentioned literal translation, delivering the practical ‘meaning’ is the goal with free gloss. At this level, the literal translation is replaced with a more meaning based, relatively free formed translation. To its advantage, it gives the researcher a chance to include the English versions of Turkish proverbs, deeper explanations to local uses or culture-specific issues, together with the whole meaning translations. This free gloss is not given in between the talk where there are overlaps, interruptions etc. It, instead, is given as a separate part at the end of the completion (if ever) of a turn as one united item combining the interrupted or overlapped speech to one single sense making whole.

There are some inevitable limitations at this level, but they are attempted to be minimised with looking up to more than one bilingual dictionary as a reference point, and also consulting the other first language Turkish speaker PhD students in the department who study Applied Linguistics, and can help with the meaning making process in cases of ambiguity because of their first language backgrounds. This mentioned double checking with first language Turkish speakers who can be defined as authorities in Turkish language and also the CA perspective because of their PhD expertise, is highly relevant for the reliability of the translation of the extracts, rather than them being only based on my conception. Although the researcher has grown up in the same region hearing/speaking the same dialect all her life; and has been

supported by the other Turkish students in Newcastle University to double check the translations, and extra explanations under the extracts, it still has some blurry points which do not have equivalent translations to English because of the cultural differences between the countries where these languages are spoken. So, the translations are made to the highest possible level, although it can not claim to prove a 100% percent equivalent because of uncontrollable factors such as the cultural differences.

Apart from these three layers in the transcript, translation of the idiomatic Turkish phrases into English has been a challenging one, because they do not have an equivalent in the target language. A frequent example to this is the religious allusions in the data. Transferring the meaning of such culture specific items to the target language (i.e. English) is managed through an extra layer at the end of the transcript where there is a short explanation for the religious/cultural element that is present in the conversation. For example in Section 4.1.2. Extract 2, the religious ritual of *sacrifice* is mentioned in talk, and the term is explained at the end of the extract “**Sacrificing an animal is a religious way of thanking God for giving one health or making a wish come true. In this example, MUJ sacrificed a sheep for being able to walk again after a broken leg.*” This strategy together with in-text explanation within the analysis is applied to all culture specific incidents where literal or idiomatic translation is not possible. (See Chapters 4 & 5 for more examples).

As it is not common to conduct Conversation Analytic studies in Turkey, such three layered transcripts with literal and idiomatic translations are not common for L1 Turkish speaker data. A good and recent one of the very limited examples is a PhD study by Ergul (2014) which looks at the “social organisation of watching television” from a Conversation Analytic perspective using this transcription/translation system. The way she deals with the issue of translation is highly similar to the method adopted for this research, apart from the fact that it also has non-verbal elements together with the three layered transcription/translation.

3.1.7. Researcher's Insider Role

In the process of conducting a qualitative research, the researcher's identity, and his/her relation to the subject group that is being studied play a crucial role. In this respect, Maykut and Morehouse (1994) point to a paradox for the role of the qualitative researcher, which is "to be acutely tuned-in to the experiences and meaning systems of others, and at the same time to be aware of how one's own biases and preconceptions may be influencing what one is trying to understand." (p.123). Similarly, Dwyer and Buckle (2009), while discussing the "space between being an insider-outsider in qualitative research" (p.60), highlight the "direct and intimate role" (p.55) the researcher plays in both data collection and analysis. Insider role refers to the type of research where the researcher studies the communities which s/he is also a member of (Kanuha, 2000). The concepts of being an insider-outsider is highly relevant for the researcher conducting this study, because the city where the research takes place is the researcher's hometown and she has a broad insight into this particular sociocultural context, which, in turn, helps her refer to her own experience/knowledge while analysing the data. This insider identity helps the researcher situate herself in the research. However, while situating herself in the research and making use of her own identity as a member of that specific culture, it is important that the researcher has an "awareness of her biases." (Rose, 1985: p.77).

In this study, the exchange between insider and outsider roles of the researcher becomes most relevant during the analysis period, because of the presence of culture specific linguistics items in talk. In CA studies, the insider identity of the researcher is used only when it becomes relevant in talk. In other words, the researcher makes his insider role effective in analysis when one or more of the participants in talk make an explicit reference to that culture specific issue. That situation requires the elaboration from the researcher as someone belonging to that culture. Apart from that, the researcher kept her stance as a CA analyst, and did not attempt to do any inferences based on her existent knowledge when there was no direct reference by the speakers. Having explained the whole research process beginning from the planning stage through the data collection and transcription-translation, the next section of the chapter describes and discusses the method of analysis adopted for this research.

3.2. Method of Analysis

The method of analysis adopted for this research is Conversation Analysis, and this second part of the Methodology Chapter will briefly introduce the ethnomethodological foundations of Conversation Analysis, and interactional organisation of talk followed by a brief discussion of the reliability and validity of the study.

3.2.1. Ethnomethodological Foundations of Conversation Analysis

Social interaction as it naturally occurs in daily life is the main tool with which the social world is formed by the parties in interaction as Goodwin and Heritage (1990) state in their fundamental paper on Conversation Analysis (p.283). Therefore, if we, as the social scientists, want to understand the social texture we are surrounded by, the interaction in this social environment, verbal and/or nonverbal, can serve as an efficient source of information. One of the earlier approaches adopted to understand this concept of *sociality* is Ethnomethodology, developed by Harold Garfinkel in 1960s in an attempt to “learn about phenomena in their own right” adopting an empirical investigation model (1967, p.1). Ethnomethodology, in its most general sense, is described as “a special kind of social inquiry, dedicated to explicating the ways in which collectively members create and maintain a sense of order and intelligibility in social life” (ten Have, 2004: p.14). The idea of “members’ creating and maintaining sense and order” points to the emic perspective of this kind of research, which also is argued by the practitioners of ethnomethodological research as the strongest aspect of this methodology.

Embarking on the teachings of Garfinkel and his ethnomethodological approach to social phenomenon, Harvey Sacks in 1970s recognised the lack of attention on the “language in use” in the previous ethnomethodological studies, and developed an analysis method of interaction called, Conversation Analysis (CA henceforth). Wooffitt (2005: p.5-25) explains the emergence of CA with a puzzlement Sacks experienced while working on a corpus of emergency calls for suicide prevention. In this corpus, the callers’ attitude towards revealing their names grabbed his attention, and when he looked deeper into the details in more than one instance, he realised that the name revealing sequences were orderly and structured, not random. This and further micro level investigations into talk by Sacks and his colleagues, Schegloff and Jefferson, brought about CA as a more developed and structured method of analysis for micro level details of social interaction. CA emerged as a highly radical perspective for studying interaction when compared

to the others of its period. The field was even described as “perhaps the only completely new sociological research methodology developed in the United States since World War II,” when it first found its place in the academic world. (Heritage, in eds. Prevignano & Thibault, 2003: p.1).

3.2.2. Interactional Organisation

a) Sequence Organisation

In order to understand the structure of interaction, CA analysts first look at the organisation of the sequence in a slightly broader sense, and define the sequences of interaction which differ from each other in what they are doing in the overall interaction, and then go into the micro details within those sequences. Sequential organization is the general term used “to refer to any kind of organization which concerns the relative positioning of utterances or actions”. Sequence organisations of social interaction are defined by answering the questions of “how are successive turns formed up to be “coherent” with the prior turn (or some prior turn), and what is the nature of that coherence?” (Schegloff, 2007: pXIV-2).

In order for the sequential organisation of a piece of talk to be understood, turns at talk and the actions they do are the two key elements to be looked at. Turns at talk are not necessarily ‘sentences’ or ‘grammatically complete’ linguistic forms, but they refer to the turn construction units (TCU) which do an action on its own even if it is a full grammatical sentence or a minimal verbal/non-verbal item in talk. What defines a turn basically is its ability to do an action in talk. Some examples to actions a turn can do are asking, answering, requesting, inviting, complaining, agreeing, telling, rejecting, and so on. In conversational terms, each turn is supposed to do at least one action, and these actions are determined based on what the second speaker says in the next turn (i.e. next turn proof procedure). In this study, the organisation of gossip sequences will be analysed turn by turn, and the actions each turn does, and the way the next turn proves that action will form the basis of the analysis.

The smallest units to be looked at in order to accomplish a turn-by-turn analysis are ‘adjacency pairs’, which can be basically defined as the two-turn exchanges in talk that complete a certain action together, such as question-answer, offer-accept and so on. Sacks and Schegloff (1973) describe the adjacency pair procedure as “given the recognisable production of a first pair part, on its first possible completion its speaker should stop and a next speaker should start and

produce a second pair part from the pair type the first is recognisably a member of.” (p.295) In their definition of adjacency pairs, Schegloff and Sacks list properties of adjacency pairs as:

1. They occur adjacently to one another.
2. They are produced by different speakers.
3. They are ordered. One is always a first pair part (FPP); the other always a second pair part (SPP). For example, an invitation always occupies FPP position, while a refusal always occupies SPP position.
4. They are type-matched, such that a particular FPP makes relevant a particular, related, SPP. For an example, an offer FPP is type-matched to an acceptance or a refusal.

The minimal pairs with these four features being the very basic unit of talk, social interaction is composed of these together with other elements preceeding first pair part of the adjacecncy pair (pre-expansion), insert between the first pair part and second pair part (insert expansion), and following the second pair part (post expansion) (Schegloff, 2007). The 28 extracts in Chapters 4 and 5 are analysed by taking these units into consideration together with the preference organisation, turn-takin mechanisms, and repair systems, which will be explained subsequently in the following sections.

b) Preference Organisation

One type of the smaller units within the sequence organisation discussed above generally occurs in the conversation as *preference organisation*. The concept of preference/dispreference is directly related to the above discussed adjacency pairs. As is stated in adjacency pair definition by Raymond (2003), the the second part of an adjacency pair is either preferred or dispreffered. The concept of preference/dispreference refers to the second pair part’s position towards the first pair part of an adjacency pair. “The concepts of preferred and dispreferred are essentially social in nature. They express the fact that some responses are problematic for social relationships, while others are not.” (Liddicoat, 2007: p.111). If we take the example of assessment (FPP) and agreement/disagreement (SPP) adjacency pairs to make these concepts clearer in mind, and keep them relevant to the focus of this study, the statement of positive or negative assessment by the first party in talk (i.e. gossip initiation) forms the first part of the adjacency pair. The preferred second part would be an agreement from the second interactant which preferably comes right after the first part, without much delay. On the other hand, when there is a dispreferred response (a disagreement in this example) from the receiver’s side, then at least one of these four elements

are likely to occur in interaction: delay, preface, an account for why disagreed, or a declination component. (Pomerantz, In Atkinson & Heritage, 1984: p.57). In this study about the gossip behaviours of the elderly, these preferred vs. dispreferred second parts form the basis of analysis as they help reveal the nature of a gossip sequence. They will be analysed and discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.2 on ‘Response to Gossip Initiation’.

c) *Turn-taking*

Together with the sequence and preference organisations in interaction, how these sequences are co-constructed by the participants’ turn taking behaviours is another important focus point for CA research. As Sacks (in ed. Lerner, 2004) puts it “one massively evident social organizationally relevant orderliness their (participants’) talk’s distribution exhibits is the taking of turns at talking.” (p.35). Although in the ideal conversations one person speaks at a time, and there should be no overlaps or interruptions from the rest of the group, so that the interaction will be comprehensible, this is just a misinterpretation of the nature of talk, and ignores the fact that what gives the interactional texture to talk is these items together with the language. (Ford et al, 2002: p.8). If we go around the above mentioned, generally misinterpreted rule of ‘one person talks at a time’, the turns at talk should be in an order. This turn construction is also handled by the multiple parties of the conversation. One possibility is that, the person who holds the floor at a time selects the next speaker finishing his/her turn with a verbal or nonverbal indicator of this selection. Second is the next speaker self-selects, and gets the floor after a relatively long pause (it should be noted here that a relatively long pause in CA can still be only a few milliseconds long). Although these two ways of turn allocation look quite neat and easily deal able, another messier form of self-selection which generally occurs as interruption (coded with an = sign) or overlaps (overlapped parts of speech are shown with square brackets []). As Schegloff (2000) puts it, “the practices of overlap resolution constitute an indigenous element of the turn-taking organization” (p.42).

d) Repair

The final interactional pattern that will be mentioned in this section when talking about CA is the organisation of repair. Repair “deals with breakdowns” in social interaction (Liddicoat, 2007: p.12), and is focused on solving the problems of understanding and/or hearing (Schegloff et al, 1977). Repair sequences are composed of three parts: trouble source, repair initiation, and repair itself. The trouble source is the FPP of the interaction where the recipient of talk has problems with either hearing or understanding. The repair initiation covers the turn/gap that signals the problem, and shows that there is a breakdown in interactional flow. The final part, actual repair, is the final turn where the problem is solved either by the speaker or the receiver.

Repair sequences are separated from each other first by who initiates the repair, and second, who actually does the repair. (Sidnell, 2009). The four types of repair relevant to this study are: 1) self-initiated self-repair, 2) self-initiated other repair, 3) other initiated self-repair, and 4) other initiated other repair. Examples of all these types of repairs, and their relevance for the structuring of gossip sequences and meaning making processes will be analysed in more detail in the next chapters on data analysis once the reliability and validity of this study are clarified in the following sections.

3.2.3. Reliability

The term reliability gains a different meaning in all disciplines depending on the focus and nature of the field. In Salter’s (1998: p.236-237) description, the concept of reliability “is used in positivist discourse to indicate that observations can be made in similar fashion in different observation instances.” (cited in Romm, 2001: p.137). Accordingly, the reliability of this type of CA studies are evaluated at two levels: the “quality of recordings” and the “quality of transcripts” (Perakyla, 2004: p.283; Seedhouse, 2005).

The first one, quality of the recordings, covers the availability of video or audio recordings and the clarity of the available recordings. In this study, audio-only data is used because of the institution’s no-visual policy. It is a generally accepted fact that no recording (audio or video) can capture everything at the same time and no data can be the exact match of what actually happened at that time and place with those people in that specific context. Having acknowledged the limitation at availability level, (see Section 3.1.5. on a broad discussion on using audio only data), the quality of recordings in the data set used for this study is quite high with two recorders

on each table with noise cut and shaking-free technologies available, which means the recorded interactions are credible to rely on for the analysis.

At the second level of reliability measure for this research lies the quality of transcripts. The same issue of representation applies to the transcripts too. It is never possible to write down every single action within an interaction. As long as the context shaping, basic details are included in the transcripts, the reader can relate them to the researcher's analysis, and thus see if the transcripts are reliable and the connections are logical.

Once the data is presented in the above described reliable manner, the next level of reliability for CA studies is guaranteed by the fact that the readers can see and analyse a close representation of the data (i.e. transcript) themselves for reliability check (Seedhouse, 2005). In this sense, providing the transcripts of the data analysed for the study ensures transparency by allowing the readers to do their own analysis of the transcripts instead of solely depending on the researcher's reported findings. This, together with the production of good quality transcripts, ensures the reliability of the study. Besides, parts of data have been presented at the official collaboration data analysis meetings called MARG, held by the PhD students at Newcastle University, and the unofficial data sessions we conducted with a group of peers (some speaking Turkish), by which outsider checks for the validity and reliability were made possible. With all the care and double checks explained in the transcription and translation section of this chapter, and the availability of the extracts to the readers, this study clearly stands within the margins of reliability.

3.2.4. Validity

The validity of observational research in its most general sense in Perakyla's (in ed. Silverman 2011) terms "concerns the interpretation of observations: whether or not the inferences that the researcher makes are supported by the data, and sensible in relation to earlier research" (p.361). For the observational research, it becomes if the researcher is using the right name for what s/he is measuring, or not (Kirk & Miller, 1986; cited in Perakyla, 2004). With the entrance of naturalistic data into the field of qualitative analysis, the concept of validity has changed. One level of validity in CA is evaluated through the transparency of analysis, which means that the researcher's analysis can be validated by the readers themselves. Sacks (in Silverman, 1998) argued that the validity of a piece of research did not depend on how a data-set was selected but on the, theoretically derived, quality of the analysis (p.71).

Another level for analysis in CA is the next turn proof procedure. It indicates, the analysis of one turn depends on how the speaker of the next turn comprehends it. This relates to CA's definition of talk to be orderly. After each sequence is analysed within itself, a second level of analysis is possible on the regular patterns that occur consistently in all cases. When this regulation is located, it can work as a validity check. As seen in previous studies (Schegloff, 1968; Clayman & Maynard, 1994) sometimes there are exceptions to the regular patterns, and these exceptions can work as triggers of forming even new hypothesis and analysis instead of the initial ones based on all the regulars.

After the single cases in the same data set are analysed and regularities are located, tested with the rest of the instances of the same phenomena, the issue of external validity which means validity outside of that specific data set comes into question. This level of validity in CA work is also related to the idea of generalizability. Generalizability of a scientific work in general refers to the applicability of its results to the larger context outside the context of that data set with the aid of numbers and statistics. However in CA studies like this one, the concept of generalizability shifts from being number oriented to a structure and/or order oriented, where similar structures of talk are expected to be seen in comparable contexts. Raymond (1996) builds up on this idea of generalisability with the evidence which shows that the outcomes of conversational micro analysis is not simply culture-specific, but rather universal in a sense that all languages share similar basic organisations. (p.15)

3.3 Summary

In the first part of this chapter of the thesis, the research design and the procedures followed while conducting the research were explained sequentially starting from the stage of questioning till the end of the actual data collection process and transcriptions and translations of the selected extracts. Following the research design and procedures came the second part of the chapter which covered Conversation Analysis, the reliability and validity of the study within the framework of CA, and lastly the limitations of the study. Having introduced the methodology to be applied in this study, the following chapter is going to present a detailed analysis of the sequential organisation of gossip, and common features that occur in gossip in this specific context.

Chapter 4. Analysis of the Sequential Organisation of Gossip

4.0. Introduction

This chapter explains the findings of the micro- analysis (i.e. CA) of gossip talk, which respond to the first research question of this thesis, ‘How is gossip sequentially organised?’ from the perspectives of gossip initiation, hearers’ response to initiation, and gossip sequence closings. This kind of turn-by-turn analysis is adapted in this section because of “its compatibility with a list of grossly observable facts about conversation.” (Sacks et al, 1974: p.696), which has already been discussed in methodology chapter of this thesis. The first subsection covers the four most commonly applied types of gossip initiation: direct evaluation/news reveal, humour, questions, and reports. The second part deals with the four main response types to gossip initiation which are clarification requests, surprise/news, agreement and lack of agreement. Agreement and lack of agreement (not only disagreement but also no uptake) is discussed under five sub sections each, based on the most common ways observed in the data set. The last section focuses on the five different types of gossip ending, which are introducing a second gossip, outside factors such as staff members or researcher, dismissals, endings with no indication, and endings with proverb/lesson/sum up.

4.1. Gossip Initiation

In this section the research question that asks ‘How does the gossip initiate gossip?’ will be answered based on the most common five types observed in the data. Although there is a variety of initiation types relevant to gossip sequences, five of them are more common, and the rest have very few samples. In this section they are listed based on their frequencies; from the most frequent to the least. The first one is the direct evaluation or news reveal about a person without any pre-sequence indicators. That is, the gossip states a point about an absent third person following an unrelated topic. The second type of initiation is by telling a story that either leads to the gossip, or the story itself is the gossip. Another way a gossip initiates a gossip topic is by the use of humour, fooling or sarcasm, giving this sarcastic sense either by his/her lexical choice or the voice and tone. The fourth way gossipers commonly uses to initiate gossip is by asking a question, either rhetorical or interrogative. The flow of the gossip sequence is shaped by the response from the listeners in the turn following the initiating question. The last type of gossip initiation is by reporting what a third party said.

4.1.1. Direct Evaluation/News Reveal of a Third Party:

The most common strategy used to reveal gossip is the direct evaluation of a third party, or direct revealing of a piece of news, without any pre-sequence preparation to the topic or the person to be gossiped about. In this type of initiation, gossip generally comes from nowhere related to the topic being talked about. The concept of *coming from nowhere* refers to the gossip topic's irrelevance to the proceeding talk. In this case, there are a few possibilities for the topic to shift to the gossip (e.g. the gossipee entering the room, or the speaker pointing to a direction), but it is not possible for the analyst to make sure what is the actual reason because of the previously discussed audio-only nature of the data. In the data set used for this research, 28 out of 92 gossip sequences are initiated by a direct evaluation or a direct news reveal.

The following extract is taken from a tea session where two of the residents, LUT and SAZ, are chatting while the rest are too far to hear them. Prior to this extract, they talk about another resident who they both had an argument with. (This separate gossip sequence is analysed in 4.2.1)

Extract 1:

- 1 (.)
2 ?1 : SU:::::::::L
 (calling the name of the staff from distance)
3 ?2 :[*baba:: (inaudible)]
 "(*baba: *slang exclamation to show anger*)"
4 LUT :[ama::n ne kadar] cok bağırıyor gı?
 oh how much shout Q
 "Oh my god! She is shouting too much, isn't she?"
5 GUL : sultan yok (0.6) sultan yo::k yo:k
 name isn't here name isn't here
 "Sultan is not here. She is not here, not here!"
6 SAZ : °ih°
 "Exclamation of tiredness."
→ 7 LUT : bizim- (0.4) ara gine başladı kokmaya.
 our- corridor again start to smell
 "Our corridor started to smell again."
8 (1.5)
9 SAZ : kim var ki orda?
 who is there
 "Who stays there?"
10 (1.4)
11 LUT : valla şeyin [(inaudible)]
 honestly that one
 "Honestly, that one's- (referring to an infinite person, but the meaning is incomplete because of the overlapped

- inaudible part)*"
- 12 SAZ : [şo garıyı] diyolardı °he kötü kokuyo ↓diyin°=
 that woman they say yes bad smell so
 "They were saying that yes that woman smells bad."
- 13 LUT : =vallaha o- kadın geleli, gine [başladı kokmaya]
 honestly that- woman come+since again start to smell
 "Honestly, it started to smell again since that woman came."

Once they verbally signal the end of that previous gossip and keep silent for 1.2 seconds (line 1), their attention changes to the woman who is shouting out for the staff in line 2. LUT, in line 4, comments on the volume of that person in a complaining tone. GUL, also located away from where LUT and SAZ are chatting, responds to the unidentified woman's call in line 5. The main gossip sequence to be analysed in this section is initiated by LUT's rather direct statement *"Our corridor started to smell again."* in line 7, which is shown with an arrow (→). Here in line 7, LUT initiates a new topic without any pre-signals. Then, after a relatively long silence (1.5 seconds), SAZ asks LUT a clarification question about who lives there. (See Section 4.2.1. for clarification request as a response to gossip initiation). While LUT, as the initiator of the gossip, is expected to know who causes the smell and nominate the person, she hedges to do so as the 1.4 second silence in line 10 shows. After this relatively long wait time, she realizes that it is her turn to speak as the recipient of the clarification request and starts the turn with a hedging marker *valla* (honestly), which, together with its other uses, is used in Turkish language as a discourse marker acting as an indicator of her hesitation to nominate the person because of the face threatening nature of the action. Also the word following it, *şeyin* (that one), shows hesitation as it signals unclarity and does not seem to function as a response to the question of "who" in SPP to FPP initiation. Following the 1.4 second silence and LUT's hesitation to give an answer, SAZ self-selects to respond to her own clarification request, and nominates the gossipee in an indirect way by referring to her as *şo garıyı* (that woman) in line 12. In her explicit statement of a woman causing the smell, she refers to what others say about that person. This, in a way, softens her direct nomination of a person as the gossip subject, and gives further bases for her claim. This type of referring to what others say in order to back up one's gossip point will also be analysed as a separate strategy used by a gossip initiator in the last part of this section (see Section 4.1.4.). Another detail worthy of analysis in this same turn, is the agreement token *he* (yes) right after the overlap between her nomination and LUT's

inaudible part. Although what LUT says is not heard, this *yes* can be inferred in two ways. Either LUT clarifies the subject in her inaudible part in line 11 and SAZ agrees with her, or that *yes* acts as an acknowledgement token to show familiarity with the gossip topic. It is not possible to make a definite argument about the function of it. Prompted by the listener's nomination of the gossipee before herself, LUT, as the initiator, immediately takes the turn latching with SAZ and gives her late clarification *o- gadın* (that woman) to SAZ's request in line 9. Her quick self-selection and latching shows that once the gossipee is defined, the face threatening issue is solved, and she is on the safe grounds to tell the gossip she initiated. The interesting thing here is that, although no direct clue was given on who *that woman* is, they both know who they are talking about, signalling a mutual understanding of the identity of the gossipee. This also justifies the analysis of the long silences shared by the two, and also the hedging. Then, they shift topic and start to talk about that same woman's political ideas, which is dealt as a second gossip in this data set.

4.1.2. Humour, Fooling, Sarcasm:

Initiation of a gossip sequence in a humorous manner is the third most common phenomena identified in this data set. It occurs 15 times in different forms such as jokes, making fool of a person, or sarcasm. These concepts of laughter, joking and humour are found hard to be distinguished from each other (Osvaldsson, 2004) because of their similarity in meaning and function in talk, so they are dealt with under the same section. They are commonly occurring means of evaluative talk, and gossip being a form of evaluation, frequent occurrence of them in gossip initiation as well as gossip body is highly expected.

In the following extract, while some residents are sitting around the table and having a conversation, the staff member who is serving them tea sees the other staff members preparing to go and pick MUJ from hospital where she has been staying for a while due to a broken leg. Then, she jumps into the conversation, and she starts talking about MUJ sarcastically. This move changes the topic of the ongoing conversation with MEL's last utterance in line 2 as the end of that sequence, and inserts a gossip sequence about MUJ and her greediness.

Extract 2:

- 1 STAFF: muj teyze ↑sanki (0.2) şeyden geliyo,
 name aunt as if that thing come
- 2 MEL :gendine güvenemiyen[ler galmış.]
 themselves be sure/neg stay
 *"The ones who are not sure of themselves stayed" (left over
 from the previous turn. Not in this gossip sequence)*
- 3 STAFF: [tatilden.]
 from holiday
 "Aunt MUJ behaves as if she is coming from holiday."*
 (1.0)
- 5 STAFF: <pa:rdüsemi getirin, çantamın içinde şey var (.) eşarp
 coat bring bag in thing there is scarf
6 var getirin>
 there is bring
 *"Bring me my coat, there is a thing- scarf in my bag, bring
 me that." (Imitating MUJ)*
 (1.1)
- 8 STAFF: terliğimi getirin >şimdi ta- garga tulumba perişanlığına
 slippers bring now frogmarching wretchedness
9 \$bak sen\$?<
 look you
 *"Bring me my slippers. Now, you look how wretched she is
 frogmarching."*
 (0.9)
- 11 STAFF: ihhihih alla::h bu dünya malı ne kadar böyle[tamah olmuş]
 god worldly possessions how much so desire
 *"Hehheheh. God! She desires worldly possessions so
 greedily."*
- 12 GUL : [şuriya gel]
 here come
- 13 [((inaudible))]
 "Come here ((inaudible unrelated))"
- 14 SUL :[hadi bana] bi su ver hadi? şu hapımı içiyim
 come on me water give come on this pill swallow
 "Come on give me some water, I will swallow my pill."
- 15 LUT :peygamber efendimizin geçen sohbeti yapıldı da,(0.3) <eğer
 prophet our master lately talk if
16 malın için diyo bak (0.4) malınnan diyo gurur duyuyosan
 properties for say look properties say proud feel
17 diyo malınnan terbiye olursun diyo>
 say properties to be tried out say
 *"Lately, there was a talk about our master prophet and he
 says if you feel proud of your properties, you will be
 tried out with your properties."*
 **If someone is to be criticised for behaving inappropriately to
 his/her difficult situation, the idiom "as if s/he is coming from
 a holiday" is commonly used. The meaning of the idiom is expected
 to give the audience the impression that this is a criticism.*

As has been described prior to the extract, in line 1, STAFF interrupts the talk between the residents and by nominating MUJ, she makes it explicit that her following turn, which is a sarcastic critique in this case, will be about her. *"Aunt MUJ behaves as if she is coming from holiday."* This line is the exact point where the sarcastic evaluation and the gossip start. As her utterance is interrupted in line 2 by MEL's attempt to complete her previous turn, the staff overlaps with MEL's last word and finishes her turn. At first sight, this overlap can be analysed as an attempt by the STAFF to take the floor, but the one second silence in line 4 signals a higher possibility of the two parties waiting for the other to go on. However, after the silence, from line 5 STAFF retakes the turn and continues her sarcastic remarks about MUJ. She imitates the way MUJ sounds while asking for her goods. Line 7 is an obvious TRP as STAFF has had two attempts to initiate a gossip about MUJ, but no one of the listeners orient to her initiation and in line 8, STAFF retakes the floor to make her criticising point more obvious *"Now, you look how wretched she is frogmarching."* Another important point that supports the analysis of her turns as sarcastic is the smiling sound audible at the end of her turn in line 9 where she says \$bak sen\$? (look) . The smiling sound indicates non-oriented sarcasm. After her smiling voice, which is also TRP for it follows a seemingly complete turn, there is another 0.9 second silence, where listeners are expected to orient to her sarcastic evaluation. Instead of orienting to the gossip initiation, the listeners keep silent during this transition relevant place and STAFF retakes the turn with a lengthy laughter ihhihih. In accordance with Kotthoff's (2000) argument that people "laugh to mark the humorous potential of an utterance" (p.64), and when analysed with the previous smiling voice, this laughter emphasizes her sarcastic tone, but none of the listeners takes on this. There is no uptake from the listeners in the next lines, but the turn can still be defined as humorous based on its "paralinguistic, prosodic and discoursal clues" (Holmes, 2000; Hay, 2001; Holmes & Marra, 2002; Purandare & Litman, 2006; Mischler, 2008 cited in Archakis et al, 2010: p.314). Then she changes her sarcastic tone to a more serious one and makes her point of critique explicit by saying *"God! She desires worldly possessions so greedily"* in the same line. Although two of the residents in lines 12, 13 and 14 still do not orient to the gossip and ask her to do unrelated tasks (go there and serve them water), a third listener, LUT finally orients to her initiation and shows her agreement quoting from prophet about how wrong it is to be greedy. This and other types of agreement to gossip will be analysed in more detail in Section 4.2.

4.1.3. Questions:

Questions also serve as a means of introducing a gossip topic to an audience who share common knowledge about the gossiped about person. They occur either in the form of a referential question expecting an answer, or in rhetorical question form that is not asked to get an answer from the audience (Koshik, 2005). The example shown in this section applies to the second type, where the gossip already knows the answer to her question, but only introduces the gossip. Prior to this sequence, SAZ and HOC (one of the administrative staff) gossip about the payments various residents in the institution make. SAZ introduces different people as the topic of gossip after each other and seeks information about them. Following this multiple gossip sequence, there is a 2 seconds silence after the last one, and SAZ introduces MUJ as the next gossipee by asking HOC a rhetorical question which she will later show that she already knows the answer to.

Extract 3:

- 1 SAZ : ↑hani sey- gurbanını kestiniz mi?
so thing sacrificial animal cut Q
"So, did you kill the thing, the animal for her (MUJ) sacrifice?"
- 2 (1.1)
- 3 HOC : kesmişler.
"They did."
- 4 (1.2)
- 5 SAZ : °hihhih° \$diyom ↑ya (0.3) gine hastaniye yattı gurban
as I say again hospital enter sacrifice
- 6 etini viyemedi\$ hihhih (0.4) °hihihi°[HAHHA]
meat eat/neg
*"As I said. She is again hospitalized, could not eat the meat of the animal she sacrificed."**
- 7 HOC : [↑kısmet]
"Fate" (Walks away.)
- 8 (7.1)
*(*Sacrificing an animal is a religious way of thanking God for giving one health or making a wish come true. In this example, MUJ sacrificed a sheep for being able to walk again after a broken leg.)*

The way SAZ structurally formulates her turn in line 1, and the rising intonation in the end make her turn act as a referential question and is treated as so by HOC in line 3 after a pause for 1.1 seconds. In line 3, HOC gives an emphasized one word response (which acts as a sentence because of the suffix system in Turkish language) to SAZ's question *kesmişler* (They

(staff) did). His response is followed by a second attempt to gossip initiation in SAZ's next turn where she uses humour combined with laughter in turn initial and turn final positions. Religiously, the person who sacrifices is not allowed to eat the meat, but is supposed to give away all of it. This turn by SAZ is interpreted as humorous because in the following part of the sequence she tells the story of seeing the staff members carrying meat into MUJ's room, although the next turn by HOC does not prove it yet. In the event of an agreement with the point of gossip and humour, the next speaker would be expected to respond with mutual laughter as a response to the gossipers' invitation to laughter (Jefferson, 1979: p.80). However in this instance, overlapping with her turn final laughter, HOC does not orient to the humour or laughter, but only says [*↑kismet* (fate)] in a sharp manner and leaves the gossip place physically. The use of the word "fate" in this type of disagreements or closures is common in cultures where religion has a big impact. HOC's lack of orientation to gossip initiation and physical departure from the place shows his non/dis-agreement and pauses the gossip for 7.1 seconds. This long silence is broken by another listener, MUS, who participated actively in the previous gossip sequences but was silent during this one until this point. Following his minimal listenership token, SAZ continues the gossip and SAZ and MUS start talking about MUJ.

4.1.4. Reports of What a Third Party Said:

The last form of gossip initiation that frequently occurs is reports of what someone else, who is not present in the talk, said about the gossip and/or gossipee. In such cases, the source of news can be explicitly stated, or kept secret by the gossip initiator. In order to understand the reported speech sentence structure in Turkish language, it should be noted here that there are two forms of simple past tense: known past tense and learned/heard past tense. Known past tense, which is shown by the suffix *-di* or *-ti*, is used to refer to the events where the speaker sees the event him/herself. For example, the sentence 'O gitti.' is in known past tense form and means 'He went (I saw it).' On the other hand, learned/heard past tense is used to refer to the events which the speaker heard from someone else, but did not witness. If the example above is changed to learned/heard past tense (*-miş*), it would be 'O gitmiş.' and the meaning would be '(I heard that) He went. (But I didn't see him go myself).' These two do have only one equivalent, Simple Past Tense, in English and translated so (Kahraman, 2013; Altun, 2014). The difference in meaning will be clear in the analysis below. For this type of gossip initiation where people tell

what they heard from others, the second type of past tense (learned/heard) is preferred to mean that the news is heard from someone else, even if the source is given, or not.

The following extract is taken from one of the most gossipy extracts where 13 gossip incidences occur successively within a one and a half hour recording. (For more information about successive gossips, see Section 4.3.1.). This specific extract covers the first 8 lines of the 7th gossip which occurs around minute 30. The previous one is about a problem MUN has with another resident. Following the end of that gossip is a 15 second silence. After the silence, FIT initiates another gossip topic about the same subject, MUN, which starts in line 1.

Extract 4:

(15.0)
→1 FIT : kim ↑dediyse, (0.3) *ümriye* get demişler de ↑norecam
who say umrah go say and what will I do
2 *ümriye* demis=
umrah say
"I don't know who it was someone said her 'Go to Umrah' and she said 'what will I do there?'"
3 MUS :bu mu?=
"Is this?"
4 FIT :=he: (.) [↑allah] gısmet [°etmesin°]
yes god let her do
"Yes. May God not let her."
5 MUS : [↑geçen:-] [geçen] de işte burda diyolardı,
the other day you see here say
6 *söylüyolardı avratlar (.) *yalımızda yalı- yalımız sı- yalı*
say women mansion mans- our mansion
7 *varıdı da ↑sattık* baba yi:: allah canını alsın ↑yalıyı sen*
there was sell (slang) god soul take mansion you
8 *nerde gördün? (0.4) ümriye git şeye git diyolar da ha:=*
where see umrah go thing go say
"The other day, the women here were saying that, telling that 'In our mansion house, mans-, our mansion house, we had a mansion house but we sold it.' God may kill you! (an expression to mean disagreement/ disbelief) Where did you see a mansion house? They tell her to go to Umrah but she does not."
*imitating her sound
(Ümre (Umrah): the non-mandatory lesser pilgrimage made by Muslims to Mecca, which may be performed at any time of the year.)

In this extract, following her claim of insufficient knowledge about the source, kim

↑dediyse, (I don't know who it was), FIT reports what she heard people say about MUN and her perspective about Umrah visit. In the first two lines where FIT initiates the gossip, she uses the learned/heard past tense form of the word 'say' (de*miş*/said) and this grammatical choice indicates that the gossip is not her own, but is a report of what she heard from an unknown third person. Latching with the end of FIT's turn, MUS requests the clarification of the subject of gossip by asking "*Is this?*" As a limitation of the data being audio only, we cannot see if he is pointing to MUN at this point or he means MUN as the topic of last gossip by his lexical choice of the demonstrative pronoun "*this*" instead of the personal one, *her*. It can still be claimed that they came to an agreement on who the person being talked about is, when FIT's latching slightly stretched =yes: in line 4 is considered. Following this confirmation, although the silence in between is only a millisecond long, MUS treats this as a completed TCU and the start of his report in line 5 overlaps with FIT's curse statement in line 4, which both start with a rising intonation signalling the turn taking. After this first overlap, before FIT completes her turn, MUS interrupts again and FIT's low voice signals that she is leaving the floor for MUS' story which he repeats his attempt to begin twice with ↑the other day:- and again the other day. Following his insistent attempt to take the turn, MUS similarly reports what else some other woman reported him about MUN, and uses a tone that is an imitation of MUN's sound which is a display of disapproval and disbelief. His added up gossip from line 5 to 8, in the same reported form as FIT's, and finalizing with paraphrasing FIT's point about Umrah clearly indicates his agreement with the gossip initiation which will be discussed in further detail in the next section.

4.2. Response to Gossip Initiation

The previous section listed the ways through which gossip sequences are initiated by the gossiper. Building on that, this section analyses the second pair parts subsequent to the initiation turns in an attempt to seek answers for the research questions "How do the participants orient to conversations on the 'negative' evaluation of other people?", and "How do the participants of the talk position themselves to the gossip? How do they reflect their positive, negative or neutral evaluations?" This will be accomplished through four main subheadings which simply summarise the conversational actions each response type does. The first covers the clarifications requests, generally in question form, which signal unclarity. The second type is a response that

shows an acknowledgement of the gossip accompanied by a surprise indicator. Then follows a section on 5 different ways of showing agreement, which are evaluation, additional comment information or criticism about the same person, different forms of yes, laughter, echo. On the other side of the picture is the lack of agreement responses which can appear in the form of long silences, explanation of a situation or rule to defend the gossipee, hedging, religious reference, and explicit assertion of dis-preference of gossip by direct statement ‘Don’t gossip!’

4.2.1. Clarification Request

One of the main forms of response to gossip initiation used by the listener is clarification request. Clarification request is defined as a question which requires clarification, confirmation, or repetition of the previous turn of a co-interactant (Corsaro, 1977). This request can indicate a hearing problem as well as a cognition problem, the function of which is defined by the next turn in talk. When there is a cognition/hearing problem about the initiated gossip in this data set, the response to it (i.e. the clarification request) most often comes in question form as is obviously visible in the following extract.

This extract is taken from a sequence where LUT and SAZ are talking to one of the visiting handcraft teachers (TEAH). During the conversation preceeding this extract, SAZ makes some residents’ identity of being Kurdish relevant, by using the word Kurd explicitly to refer to them as a nickname. As an outsider to the institute, TEAH shows her recipiency of information by asking LUT and SAZ if those Kurdish people speak Kurdish in their conversations or not. The following sequence starts from this point where LUT answers TEAH’s question claiming her insufficient knowledge, then takes the topic to an evaluative level initiating gossip about the status of the gossipees’ relation/friendship. She explains that these Kurdish residents in the institution cannot get on well. (Family and relations as a gossip topic will be addressed in Section 5.3.)

Extract 5:

- 1 LUT : °bilmiyom.° ↑hiç ↑anlaşamıyolar ki kızım.
I don’t know never get on well daughter
- 2 (2.3)
- 3 LUT :onlar da annaşamıyolar.
they either get on well
- 4 (3.0)
- 5 LUT :demin nakadar kaba konuştu?

just now how rude talk
"I don't know. They never get on well, daughter. (2.3) They can't get on well either. (3.0) The way she talked just now was very rude, wasn't it?"
6 (1.0)
→7 SAZ : ↑kim=
 "Who?"
8 LUT : =norecin ağza alınmayacak kelimeler yakışmıyo↑
 what/do nameless words benefit
9 ↑yapmayın [bunu dedim]
 don't do this say
 "What will you do? (We can't change the situation.) I said 'Nameless (rude/Swear) words don't benefit you. Don't do this.'"
10 TEAH : [cık cık] cık cık
 "Tut tut"
11 LUT : mujnan heralda-,
 MUJ/with I think
 "With MUJ, I think."
→12 SAZ : ↑kim
 "Who?"
13 LUT : şey emi gine döğüşmüş bugün heralda
 well EMI again quarrel today I think
 "MUJ and, well, EMI quarrelled again today I think."
14 SAZ : eyi?
 "What?"
15 LUT : <mujnan emi döğüşmüşler heralda>
 MUJ EMI quarrel I think
 "MUJ and EMI quarrelled I think."
 (2.5)

As stated above, the turn by LUT in line 1 starts with a low-pitched claim of insufficient knowledge, °bilmiyom.°, (I don't know) for TEAH's identity related question. Then she expands on the topic stating the nature of their relationship which is not well. Line 3 indicates a lack of uptake from either listener. Following the 2.3 second long silence, LUT retakes the turn and self-repairs her previous statement by repeating the same utterance. This form of repair, repetition, indicates that she read the silence as a signal for a hearing problem. After this TCU is completed, there is another long pause, 3.0 seconds. No one from the listeners orients to the gossip initiation and LUT reformulates her initiation in line 5, finally giving a more specific point, "The way she talked just now was very rude, wasn't it?" One second after this point, in line 7, SAZ makes it obvious that she needs clarification on ↑kim= (who) the gossip is about. As this relatively short TCU came after a long wait time of one second, LUT latches with SAZ to expand further on her negative evaluation of the

gossipee's language. TEAH's evaluative tut tuts overlap with the end of LUT's turn and continues after she finishes her utterance. As stated above, the number of tut tuts in a turn generally relates to the degree of non-approval and criticality. Line 11 is the very specific point where SAZ's request is oriented for the first time, where LUT nominates MUJ as the topic of gossip as a response to the question $\uparrow_{kim=}$, (who) in line 7. She continues her nomination with a hedged assertion *heralda-*, (I think) (Lakoff, 1973). Post-positioned 'I think' as in this case is placed in the second part of the adjacency pair that acts as a response turn to the clarification request in line 7, and the scope of the 'I think' in this line is the "turn-so-far", which covers the "*MUJ and, well, EMI quarrelled again today*" part. (Kärkkäinen, 2003: p.162). In the next line, SAZ expands on her clarification request asking \uparrow_{kim} (who) with a rising intonation and emphasis. This turn and the way it is uttered makes it clear to LUT that there is another problem (who MUJ quarrelled with) and in her next turn, she nominates the person who MUJ quarrelled with, EMI. At this point, the two parties of the quarrel are both explicitly nominated by LUT, but to be on the safe ground, she again uses the hedging device *I think*. With the explicit nomination of the people who are the subject of gossip, it is expected that the clarification request is responded and the problem source is solved. However, line 14 by SAZ, indicates that the repair was initiated due to a hearing problem, and is re-initiated by a more general question "*What?*" Normally, in conversations, a clarification request goes from more general to specific, but in this example, the consistency of the problem ends up in a more general question demanding the repetition of the full turn. In line 15, LUT repeats her whole utterance and re-initiates the gossip at once in a slower manner with a hedging marker for the third time in the same sequence *<I think MUJ and EMI quarrelled>*. This full TCU acts as a re-initiator of the gossip topic and the 2.3 second silence in the next line, line 16, where SAZ could take the turn if the problem was not solved, indicated that the repair was successful this time and LUT retakes the turn and the gossip continues among LUT, SAZ and TEAH.

4.2.2. Surprise/News

The second type of response to gossip initiation is the one where the listener orients to the initiation as news and shows surprise using various surprise tokens such as "*ama:n, da::, vu::, a::, h1:::, ay::, o::*" etc. It is not possible to translate these to English as they are only function words which are only meaningful within a context, or as a response to a

news. They will all be translated as ‘Gosh!’ , but the meaning nuances, if there are any, will be mentioned in the analysis.

Out of the incidents that have surprise tokens as SPP to gossip initiation, the following extract is picked, because it includes more than one example and might supply a better understanding of the phenomenon described in this section. The sequence starts with DON telling a story of what happened between FATM and GUL to a crowded group of listeners from line 1 through 4. Then follows:

Extract 6:

- 1 DON : ↑fatmin ım:: (0.6)topal herifin avrad-a üzüm vermişler
FAT- er:: crippled man wife grapes give
2 yiyomuş, (0.7) <bağa üzümü ver dimiş> elinden, (0.3) ↑bağa da
eat me grape give say hand me too
3 ver dimiş (0.5)oda >niye veriyom dimiş. vermiyo diyin etini
give say she why give say give for arm
4 şöylece ↑sıkılmış, < (0.8)çağattırmış.
like this pinch make her cry
"They gave grapes to FAT- er:: the crippled man's wife and she was eating. She ((GUL)) said 'Give me your grapes. Give me some grapes, too.' FAT said 'why shall I give you?' GUL said 'Why don't you give?' and pinched her arm for she didn't give making her cry."
5 (0.7)
6 DON : ↑sen vermiyon diyin.
you give because
"Because you don't give."
7 (1.3)
→8 ??? : °ama::n°=
"Gosh!"
9 MEL : =kokmuş [↑kokacak] onun uçun [((inaudible))]
virago quarrel that's why
"Virago! She is going to quarrel again that's why..."
→10 DON : [↑da::=]
"What on earth!"
11 DON : [↑yok(.) avrat,] ↑hah i::-
no woman yes er:-
12 golunu sıkıncık canı acıyıncık ↑sarpadan deynanen vurmuş
arm pinch feel pain smack stick
13 topal avrat
crippled woman
"No! Er yes! When GUL pinched her arm and she felt the pain, the crippled woman (FATM) smacked her with her walking stick."
→14 TEAH : vu::
"Gosh!"

From lines 1 to 4, DON tells the story of the fight between FATM and GUL. At the beginning of her turn, she uses direct nomination but then self-repairs and changes her gossip from \uparrow fatmin to *the crippled man's wife*. Not depending on the analysis of turns here but from my own ethnographic knowledge about the residents in the institute, she repairs her nomination because there are three people with the same name in this institute and she makes the distinction through making her identity as a man's wife relevant, because the other ones are single. It should be pointed here that, the man is not crippled, his wife, FATM is. No one orients to DON's mistake at this point, she self-repairs twelve lines later. She uses various components of story-telling in this extended turn, such as changes in pitch and tone, continuation markers, emphasis at certain peak points etc. The falling tone in line 4 and the 0.7 second silence following that indicate the end of turn, and it is possible for any listener to take the floor as no next speaker is selected by the story teller, DON. However, as no one takes the floor after the TCU and the silence, DON retakes and repeats the part of her turn where she says the reason for GUL's behaviour which she thinks is the most important in the story, "*Because you don't give.*" A quite long silence of 1.3 seconds following this highlighted repair is terminated by more than one listeners simultaneously uttering the surprise token °ama : : n° in line 8. This line is latched by MEL's agreement in the form of expansion in the gossip topic in line 9 where her lexical choice of a negative evaluative adjective *virago* indicates her supporting stance to the gossip topic. The extended [\uparrow da : :=] in line 10 overlapping with MEL is one of the surprise tokens commonly used in this data set, and has an evaluative aspect together with surprise. DON's use of this token following her own gossip to shows her agreement to the previous surprise effect °ama : : n° by the others. In line 11, without waiting for MEL's turn, DON retakes the turn overlapping with MEL for a second time in one single turn, and tells the rest of the story with frequent rises in tone. Here comes the above mentioned delayed self-repair by DON on the woman being the *crippled* one, not the man. TEAH in line 14 shows her surprise to the second part of the story with the exclamation vu : : . This indicates her acknowledgement of the news and shows her surprise as a reaction to it.

4.2.3. Agreement

The third one of the four main response types to gossip initiation is agreement. What is meant by agreement in gossip context is the incidents where the listener is of the same opinion with the gossipier and shows this similarity in ideas in the second pair part following the gossip initiation. The most common ways the listeners in this data set show their agreement are giving their own evaluation about the gossipee, adding up extra negative comment/information or criticism about the gossipee, different forms of yes as an indication of confirmation, laughing and echoing all or parts of the initiation turn. The following sections of this chapter includes illustrative examples to each one of these agreement types from the most common to the least depending on the number of incidents in the corpus of this study. It should be noted that in most cases, more than one form of agreement is used by the same or different listeners in one single extract.

1-Evaluation:

In accordance with the evaluative nature of gossip as a genre, the most common form of second pair part agreement turn among the participants of this research is the second speaker giving his/her own evaluation of the gossipee. A listener shows his/her agreement through various evaluative devices. One of them is negative *tut tutting* as a response to the gossip initiation, as has been exemplified in Sections 4.1.3. and 4.2.1. Another common form is describing the gossipee with a negative and rude adjective such as *idiot*. Similar to this, the gossip is often agreed upon by the listener simply referring to the gossipee with a rude nickname that points to the gossipee's physical disabilities (e.g. hunchbacked) or personality features (e.g. devil), or another nickname used to address the problem for that specific incident. The gossip initiation-response sequence chosen to illustrate the phenomena for this section has an example of a nickname describing that person's behaviour with a sarcastic word that shows the listener's evaluation of the gossipee. While the participants are talking about something different, the conversation is interrupted by the sound of a dropped glass from far away. Everyone audible in the conversation orients to that sound and someone asks "Did she break the glass?" After a long silence where no one takes the floor to answer the question, STAFF self-selects and complains about EMI in line 1.

Extract 7:

- 1 STAFF : her gün döküyo, her gün döküyo, hiç içemiyo.°
every day spill every day spill at all drink
"She spills every day, she can't drink at all."
2 (1.1)
3 DON : eli titiriyo, bi de işiy: öteberi umuyo?
hand shake but thing this and that want
"Her hands shake but she wants to have the thing
everything." (She wants everything she sees.)
4 (1.8)
5 DON :bana da verin, bana da °verin.°
me too give me too give
"Give me too, give me too." (imitating her)
6 (2.6)
7 MUN : şahzade↑
"Princess"

In line 1, the staff complains about EMI in a constant tone of voice. She is not explicitly nominated in the data, but the recordings previous to and following this extract shows that the *She* in line 1 is EMI, a paralysed resident. After a 1.1 second silence in line 2, which would be relatively long to be followed by an agreement, DON shows her agreement with STAFF's criticism and she helps the co-construction of the gossip adding up to STAFF's points (see the next section for agreement in the form of adding up extra negative comment and critique, which DON does in lines 3 and 5.) The 1.8 second silence in line 4 indicates a TRP where either the listeners or the gossip initiator herself can take the turn and give DON feedback on her expansion, but no uptake from either of them leads DON to retake the floor and mimic EMI's demand to have everything, "*Give me too, give me too*". Another long pause of 2.6 seconds follows this more explicit gossip construction, and after that long wait time, the second listener MUN, shows her agreement using a metaphor with a rising tone, "*Princess!*" where she compares EMI's demanding behaviour to a king's daughter who would expect to get everything she wants. In this extract, one important aspect to be pointed out is the length of pauses. Normally the micro-analysis of conversations show that when there is a preferred response to a FPP, which is agreement in this case, it is expected to come promptly after the FPP in contrary to the delayed dispreferred response (i.e. disagreement) (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). The delays in preferred response in gossip extracts can be explained with the face-threatening nature of gossip talk, where parties in talk hesitate to agree immediately.

The second most commonly occurring type of agreement to FPP gossip initiation is through elaborating further on the gossip by making an additional comment, giving extra negative information about the gossipee or criticising the same or an additional characteristic of him/her. From the examples in the data set, when this SPP is in the form of an extended turn, it initially starts like a non-agreement turn (see Section 4.2.4. on Lack of Agreement), then the speaker shows his/her agreement with her lexical choice together with the change in the style to a more evaluative one.

Extract 8:

- 77

- 11 götürün diye<
 take
 "Well, tonight till the morning, she made everyone hopping mad in order to take her to the hospital."
- 12 SAZ : ↑AMBULANSINAN DÜNDEN GİTTİ GELDİ (.) NÖ:RECEK HASTANE?
 ambulance yesterday go come what/do hospital
 "She went by the ambulance yesterday, what will the hospital do?" (they can't heal her)

In line 1, SAZ introduces FATO as the topic of the upcoming gossip by introducing what she did referring to her with a negatively connoted nickname that described her physical problem, hunchbacked. Her first attempt to initiate the gossip is not uptaken by a listener, and after the 1.9 wait time, SAZ retakes the floor and this time reformulates her initiation with a questioning tone. Her question is obviously a rhetorical one, and the rising tone through the end together with the complete TCU makes a transition relevant. In line 4, LUT introduces an inserted expansion sequence requesting clarification of the person being talked about. SAZ in the next line orients to this repair initiation as a hearing problem and repeats the nomination she previously used to refer to FATO, *gambur (the hunchbacked)*. After this repair is accomplished, in line 7, LUT orients to the gossip initiation, and adds up to SAZ's point by explaining the reason why she did it. Then in line 8, SAZ responds to LUT's elaboration on the topic showing her anger with her increased volume. LUT in line 9 overlaps with the end of SAZ's turn and makes her agreement more explicit by telling her own story about FATO which summarises the complaints about her by the staff about how she made everyone mad that night. As has been stated earlier, most agreement SPPs come in a neutral-like form at first and then are carried to an evaluative level with a more specific remark as visible in this example. Although LUT agrees with SAZ's point of criticism about FATO, she only makes it obvious in her second turn when her first one is not oriented to as an agreement by the gossipier. This is a commonly observed phenomenon in this data set.

3-Forms of "Yes": "he" "evet" "ya:" "hıh" "iste" "öyle":

Following the evaluation and additional remarks, the use of different forms of "yes" is the third most common way of agreement to a gossip initiation, and the most explicit one. The words "he" "evet" "ya:" "hıh" "iste" "öyle" are all forms of yes/ explicit agreement (Ogden, 2005), and the level of agreement is sometimes indicated by the prolongation of the last one or two

sounds as will be shown in the example.

This following extract is taken from an afternoon recording where after about half an hour's recording one of the residents, FATM, asks about the recorder and what it is, even though the research has been taking place for more than a month then. In the initial part of this sequence, MUS and FIT respond to FATM's question about the voice recorder, and the sequence ends with MUS' explanation about what it is recording. This explicit statement also relates to the nature of this data being naturally occurring, which means the same interaction would take place even if the recorder was not there. After this short interaction about the recorder and its aim, MUS, in line 7, initiates the gossip sequence that this section is interested in.

Extract 9:

- 1 FIT : gonuŝtuĝunu ↑çekiyo?=
 what you say record
 "It records what you say."
- 2 MUS : =↑he: iŝte [gonuŝtuĝunu ↓alıyo]
 yes you see what you say take
 "Yes you see, it records what you say."
- 3 FATM : [↑biŝey de diyemiyok?]
 anything say
 "We can't say anything."
- 4 (0.4)
- 5 MUS : ↑ya: ne diyeca:n iŝte:- (.) aha ↑söylediĝin iŝte yiter.
 well what say you see say enough
 "Well what will you say. What you are saying is enough."
- 6 (6.0)
- 7 MUS : >daha ŝonun yanına gomuyo da guzel fısrır fısrır ŝsöyler.h.
 prov. that next to put well in whispers talk
8 .h.usul.h.ca.hhŝ=
 slowly
 "She doesn't put it next to that one over there ((referring to another resident)). She would talk in whispers slowly."
- 9 FIT : =↑he:::
 yes:::
- 10 (1.0)
- 11 MUS : ŝiy de gelirse? (0.9) ŝari mi neyse↑ (0.3) gulaĝana
 that too come ari Q or so ear
- 12 (inaudible)ŝ=
 "If that one comes too, is she called ARI or so? To her ear-"
- 13 FIT : =ari çokça ekmaĝa aldı buriya godu geldi
 ari lots of bread take here put come
 "ARI took lots of bread, put them here and came."

MUS, in line 7, initiates a gossip sequence about someone who is visible to them but is far away, so cannot hear them. (The turn initial demonstrative statement *daha şo (that one)* addresses the gossip subject's visible presence in the scene, although she is far away to hear them). MUS' lexical choice *in whispers* together with the smiling voice he prefers in his turn makes his ironic gossipy content explicit to the hearer, FIT, who latches with this initiation in line 8 where she uses a direct form of yes with a rising intonation and in a prolonged form, *=he: : :*, to show the high degree of her agreement with the gossip. Following this strong agreement by the hearer, neither of the parties take the turn for a second pause. After the pause, MUS self-selects as the gossip initiator and further elaborates on the gossip point adding it another angle by nominating a second potential gossip, ARI. He uses the same smiley voice strategy as in the previous turn to make his ironic point. As a response to this, FIT in line 13 ends the previous gossip about *that one over there* and ARI and initiates a new gossip about ARI on another issue. (See Section 4.3.1. for second gossip as gossip ender).

4-Laughter:

Laughter as the second turn by the listener following the gossip turn is another common form that agreement takes. Although laughter has many functions in conversations such as showing nervousness, surprise, awkwardness and so on, the conversation analysis research about laughter generally agree on its function as a form of positive attention and display of hearership (O'Donnell-Trujillo & Adams, 2009) that acts as agreement, which is the function that will be discussed in this section, because, similarly in this data set, hearers often show their agreement with the gossip by laughing in the next turn.

The following extract is an example of laughter as a way of agreement applied by both listeners. In this extract, AYS is gossiping about one of her dead husband's relatives who took all her inheritance to spend on his own kids and who has no money left for either himself or AYS. FATM and MUS are the listeners and they show their agreement with different laughter forms in various prolongations.

Extract 10:

1 AYS : ↑dört dene ↑eminenin uşağı vardı. (1.1) °gızının↓° (0.4)
four (name) kid had daughter

2 o ↑dört ↑uşağın ↑go:nünü gördü↓
those four kid please
"His (the gossipee's) daughter, Emine, had four sons. He gave money to her four sons."

3 (1.6)

4 AYS : ondan sonra da bunların gönlünü gördü?
then these please
"Then he gave money to his other children."

5 (1.0)

6 AYS : ↑kendine de bişey kalmadı. (.)↑bana da bişey kalmadı.
himself anything left me too anything left
"There was nothing left for either him or me."

→7 MUS : ih[hihihihih]

8 AYS : >[zibidi diyom] ↑sana da kalmadı bana [da °kalmadı°]<=
dirtbag tell you left me left
"I tell him 'Dirtbag, there is no left either for you or for me.'"

9 MUS [hihihihihi]=

→10 FATM : =ihhihi[hihihi]ihihi

11 AYS : [gülüyo?]
"He laughs."

Starting from line 1, AYS is telling the gossip of how her dead husband's nephew took her money and spent it on his own children and grandchildren (see Section 5.3. for family members as gossip topics). The listeners do not know the gossiped about person, but only join the gossip with agreement or non-agreement. Within this gossip initiator story, in line 3 there is a pause for 1.6 seconds which is relatively long considering the genre of the conversation here being gossip. As the data is limited to audio recordings only, it cannot be estimated for sure, but the non-orientation to TRP in this specific line by either of the listeners and the prolonged laughter agreement in the upcoming lines make the analyst assume that they are waiting for the story to end. However, we cannot comment about the possible nonverbal involvement within this silence due to the previously mentioned limitation of the data. After this silence, AYS retakes the turn in line 4 and finishes her further elaboration with a questioning tone, which signals another TRP, which is again not oriented to by either of the listeners. Following this one second silence, in line 6, AYS retakes the turn for the third time and finishes her story with an ironic comment and tone, signalling a climax for the story. At this point, the first listener MUS, orients to the ironic

- "She has an elder brother and he said that "She should Sacrifice herself for your hand (An idiom used to say that Sth/sb is not as valuable as you are). Aunt, isn't it a pity for your eyes." he said. I had surgery on both eyes, see."
- 8 (1.1)
- 9 SAZ : [↑daha şu ↑gözüm-den-]
demons. this eye
 "From this eye-"
- 10 TEAH : [gurban olsun] tırnağına↑ gurban olsun
sacrifice nail sacrifice
 "She should sacrifice herself. She should sacrifice herself for your nail. (She is not as valuable as you are.)"
- 11 (0.5)
- 12 TEAH : °tır[nağına gurban olsun]°
nail sacrifice
 "She should sacrifice herself for your nail. (She is not as valuable as you are.)"
- 13 SAZ : [ama↑ bilmeyen bilmedi] na:pıyım?=
but value value what can I do
 "But, she didn't value whatever I did. What can I do?"
- 14 TEAH : =↑i:şte işte.
 "So so."

The first lines of this extract follow TEAH's previous compliment about SAZ's work. She tells a story about how much she used to knit and how good she was at it when she was young. The way she starts her turn swearing with a rising tone ↑yemin ederim :, (I swear) indicates her seeking for approval/agreement from the listener. Following this stressed and prolonged swear initiation, SAZ tells TEAH that she used to prepare a bundle of knitwear for the kids till her daughter-in-law came for the holidays. Within the first line of her turn, there are three pauses of 0.6, 0.7, and 1.1 seconds. These are not treated as TRPs by the listener, TEAH, as the turn does not involve any signals of possible completion at those points and also the meaning at those points signal a further elaboration on the topic as in *diyom ya* (as I say) where what is that is being said is expected to follow. However, after line 3, the story is completed with the main idea of SAZ preparing a lot of knitwear before the kids came. The 1.2 secs silence in line 4 is a relevant place for the listener to comment on SAZ's self-praise, but TEAH does not take the turn. SAZ at this point retakes the turn and supports her self-praise with reference to her daughter-in-law's brother who is reported to say *eline gurban olsun* (She should sacrifice herself for your hand). The expression "to sacrifice someone for someone's nail/hand" is a relatively strong one which is used to mean that "You are so valuable

that you shouldn't bother yourself for that person/thing. He/She/It is not as valuable as you are." In this extract, the way SAZ reports his (brother's) words, shows her agreement with him on the fact that her daughter-in-law is not worth the effort she is putting on while knitting for her children. This is where the evaluative comment comes, and the gossip about the daughter-in-law is initiated by this indirect reference to someone else's comments. (See Section 4.1.4. for reports as gossip initiation)

In line 8, there is a silence for 1.1 seconds immediately after which both the speaker and the listener take the turn simultaneously. SAZ retakes the turn to elaborate more on the surgery she had from one of her eyes, which she had mentioned at the end of her previous turn. TEAH, overlapping with this elaboration picks up the gossip initiation element, the idiom explained above, as the topic of her turn and echoes what the daughter-in-law's brother is reported to say [gurban olsun] tırnağına gurban olsun (*She should sacrifice herself. She should sacrifice herself for your nail.*) Overlapping with SAZ in her first attempt to echo, TEAH self-repairs and repeats the idiom again to emphasize her point. Following her double echo in line 10, there is a 0.5 second TRP which is not taken by SAZ. After that, TEAH repeats the echoed idiom once again, in a more silent voice this time, where SAZ overlaps and makes her point explicit saying [ama bilmeyen bilmedi] na:pyım?= (*But, she didn't value whatever I did. What can I do?*) Right after SAZ finishes her statement of desperation about her value being overlooked, TEAH in line 14 latches with this statement and directly repeats her agreement, =i:şte işte. (Right right).

4.2.4. Lack of Agreement

In this section of the analysis chapter, the non/dis-agreement forms in gossip sequences will be analysed. Before creating an illustration of the forms of non-agreement, it should be noted here that most gossip initiations are responded with implicit or explicit forms of agreement to the gossip point, lack of agreement is not as common as agreement in this data set, but still there are examples to it. The non/dis-agreement as response to gossip initiation is the dispreferred second pair part for the gossip. The non-agreement forms in this data set are observed in two types. The first one is disagreement, where the listeners explicitly or implicitly indicate their disagreement with the gossip. The second type is where the listener does not make it clear if they

agree with the gossip, disagree with it, or if they are totally neutral to the topic. That is why they are combined under the name *lack of agreement*. The five most common forms of non/dis-agreement to be exemplified in this section are (1) long silence/no orientation as a sign of non-agreement, (2) explanation of a situation or rule to defend the gossipee, (3) referring to an extra positive point about the gossipee, (4) dis/non agreement with religious or moral reference, and (5) disagreement with religious reference.

1-Long silence/No orientation:

In standard conversations, there are minimal adjacency pairs, which means the conversations are like a chain and each turn is linked to the previous and following turns. In the dynamics of adjacency pairs, the first pair part of it is expected to be followed by a second pair part, sometimes directly after the FPP, and sometimes there are insert expansions between first and second pair parts. (Schegloff, 2007: p.97). However, in some conversations, the second pair part can be either in the form of a silence although there is a TRP at that point, because that silence is “considered as belonging to the person who was expected to produce the second pair part (Garcia & Jacobs, 1998), or the expected next speaker can totally ignore the FPP, and orient to something else. Following is an example to no orientation to gossip initiation.

Previous to the extract below, the neutral conversation between the residents is about the two handicraft teachers. One asks where they are, as it is the time of the day for their knitting classes, and the others discuss where they can be, either at the manager’s room or at the male residents’ floor. The talk continues at a neutral level till this point where MEL initiates an evaluative talk comparing these two teachers with the religious officer (imam) in her village who does an extra job during summer school break to earn more money together with the regular salary he gets for his permanent job.

Extract 12:

- 1 MEL : ↑şimdi bizim: köyü bi imam böylece ediyo okul ↑dağıldı
 now our village a imam like this do school close
 2 mıydı üç ay? (0.5) >çocukları camide okuduyom deyin, hemi-
 when 3 months children mosque teach for both
 3 aylığını alıyo bi de böyle çocuk okutma↑<(.) alıyo bu da-
 salary take and like this child teach take this too
 4 bunlar da öyle ediyomuş ↑hah
 these too so do see

- "Now, the imam in our village does like this. When the schools close for summer holiday, he both earns his regular salary and gets extra payment for teaching the children during the summer. This- these (the handicraft teachers) do the same, see."
- 5 (0.7)
- 6 MEL : [↑hem öğretmenlik şeyi alıyolar ↑hemi]
both teacher thing earn and
"They both earn their regular teacher salary and..."
- 7 LUT : [°kalkıyım namazımı da kılıyım onlar] gelene kadar.° (0.5)
get up namaz preform they come till
 8 NAMAZIMI DA [KILIYIM DA ONLAR GELENE KADAR DIYOM?]
namaz perform they come till I say
"Let me get up and perform namaz (the ritual pray for Muslims) till they come back. I say, let me perform namaz till they come back."
- 9 MEL : [↑alla::h allah allah (inaudible) e allah]
 10 [azınan da kaneet etmiyo da?]
little to get satisfied with (neg)
"Allah Allah Allah Allah (repetition of the name Allah shows negative evaluation like 'tuk tuk'), they don't get satisfied with little, they are so greedy."
- 11 SAZ : [↑ben de abdestliyim* namazımı] kılıyım da, (0.3) şey
me too ablution* namaz preform then
 12 [nama-]
- 13 FAT : [oldu] mu ilkindi?=
is Q mid-afternoon namaz
"Is it the time for mid-afternoon pray? (The third of the five pray times in Islam, which is around 2 pm.)"
- 14 SAZ : =çayımı içiyim ↑de=
tea drink then
"I have ablution too. I will perform namaz after I perform namaz, nama-, after I finish my tea."*
- 15 LUT : =olmuştur- (0.5) saat ikiyi geçti.
must be time two past
"It must be. It is already past two."
- 16 (1.1)
- 17 MEL : ↑ilkindiyi mi kılıyon:?
mid-afternoon Q perform
"Are you going to perform mid-afternoon namaz?"
- 18 LUT : he::.
"Yes."
- *(Ablution is the washing of parts of body before praying. The literal translation I have, ablution means I did the washing ritual earlier, so I am clean now, I am ready to perform namaz.)

In line 1, MEL self-selects with a rising intonation and compares the two handicraft teachers in the institution to the imam in her village. The prolonged turn from line 1 to 3 is a pre-emptive story to initiate her gossip. From the end of line 3 to line 4, she makes her point of criticism less

implicit by stating that *these (women) do the same*. Following this direct comparison, there is a silence for 0.7 seconds, which is a relevant place for any of the listeners to comment on this point. As no one takes it, MEL, in line 6, retakes the turn and reformulates her point of them earning both their regular teacher salary and getting extra payment for the placement they have in the institution. LUT overlaps with MEL on this reformulation and talks about something totally different, performing a religious ritual, and she does not orient to MEL's comments about the outsiders of the institution. In line 8, LUT still does not orient to the gossip initiation by MEL, and she self-repairs her previous statement in line 7 which overlapped with MEL's in line 6. Her increased volume and the fact that she repeats exactly what she has already said makes it obvious that she treats the problem source which requires repair as a hearing problem although we cannot see how the other parties in the conversation initiated the repair. During this repair line, MEL self-selects again and makes this evaluative remark ↑alla::h allah allah. Repeating the name of god is a means of showing criticism or disapproval, the same way as it is with *tut tuts* explained earlier. Following this disapproval remark through the repetition of god's name, she makes her gossip point entirely explicit, [azinan da kaneet etmiyo da?] (*they don't get satisfied with little*). Culturally, getting satisfied with little, and not asking for more is an appreciated behaviour, and she refers to this cultural item to criticise these people working to earn more. Simultaneously as MEL is saying this, in line 11, SAZ also ignores what MEL is talking about, and she responds to the topic shifted by LUT, which is the religious ritual to be performed. Following SAZ, the fourth participant in the conversation, FAT, comes to stage and she also picks up LUT's topic as the medium of conversation and asks for the time of prayer. From here on, all the three participants orient to the topic shift and ignores the greediness of the teachers proposed by MEL. Eventually MEL, in line 17, also orients to the topic shift and she asks about the prayer as well. So the ignorance of the three listeners, LUT, SAZ and FAT, brings the gossip initiation to an early end which is not common for gossip sequences in this data set. There is no preferred or dispreferred response, the only (possible) comment on SPP is dispreferred ignorance.

2-Explanation of a Situation/ Institutional Rule:

Within the large data set analysed for this study, the second most commonly used tool for non/dis-agreement is through the explanation of a rule or a must, which functions like a defence

for the gossipee. Although the data is collected from casual conversations between the residents of an old people's home, the context they are in makes it semi-institutional as the residents are affected by the rules of the institution called the Old People's Homes and Elderly Care and Rehabilitation Centres Code (2001). Despite the fact that there are not as many cases of non/dis-agreement as the ones of agreement to gossip initiation, this rule based rejection of a gossip topic is the second most common way of doing that.

Prior to the moment where the selected extract begins, the residents are talking about the food offered in the institution, and the institution's deficiency to provide alternative no-sugar desserts for the residents suffering from diabetes. After this, the topic shifts to the way the staff behaves while serving food, and SAZ starts telling what happened when they ran out of water for the tea during breakfast that morning. SAZ and DON are residents in the institution, and TEAH is one of the two temporarily placed handicraft teachers.

Extract 13:

- 1 SAZ :<su bitti? (0.7) ↑git (0.3) has beye ↑de de getiriyim?>
 water run out go has mr say bring
- 2 (1.0)
- 3 SAZ : ulan dedim sizin ↑has beyinizi de sizi de dedim,
 man I said your has mr too you too I said
- 4 (1.2)
- 5 SAZ : ↑HEP HAS BEYE Mİ DANIŞACA::K?(0.3) ↑allahın* didarını da
 always hasan mr Q ask allah's* water(local)
- 6 mı hasan beye <°danıştım° °dedim°>=
 Q hasan mr ask I said
 *"(During breakfast) There was no water left in the kettle.
 The staff said 'Ask Mr. Has (the manager) for extra water
 so that I can bring more.' I said 'Man! I will ... you and
 your Mr Has! (Expression of anger.) Will we ask for
 his permission for everything? Will we ask for his
 permission for God's water?'"*
- 7 DON :=te- bi ↑bardak çayınan da ekmek- (.) gakılır mı? ↓hemen
 one glass tea bread leave Q right off
 *"Well, is it possible to leave the table right off with
 only one glass of tea with bread?"*
- 8 SAZ : (Coughs)
- 9 DON : vallah (.) >istersen yi istersen yime: ?<=
 really want/if eat want/if eat/neg
 "Really. Eat or not." (They don't care.)
- 10 TEAH : =ama onları [da onları da- onlar ı:: özellikle burd-]
 but them them they er:: deliberately
- 11 DON : [herkes keyif uçun mu iki dene içiyo içek diyo]

- everyone fun for Q 2 drink drink say**
- "Does everyone drink- want to drink two glasses arbitrarily?" (Drinking more than one glass of tea for breakfast is a tradition in most parts of Turkey. It is habitually a must to have more than one, not an arbitrary request in this case.)
- 12 TEAH : <yani burdakilerini de (.) şey yapmak lazım
well here/ones too do must
- 13 [onları tembihliyolar.]>
them warn
 "Well we shouldn't judge the ones here (the staff), they are warned (by the managers)"
- 14 SAZ : [ya: gurban olduğum] (.) gızım
well sacrifice daughter
- 15 (0.4)
- 16 TEAH : tembihliyolar [şey yapıyorlar onlar da kendileri]
warn do they too themselves
 "They (the managers) warn them (the staff), they don't do so themselves."
- 17 SAZ : [Bİ ÇAYDANLIK- bi çaydanlığı] doldur
one kettle one kettle fill
- 18 da, getir de, hepsine yetsin
so bring everyone enough
 "Well, my dear daughter. One kettle, if they bring one full kettle, it will be enough for everyone."
 (*God's something, water in this extract, is an expression that means water is a God-given element that everyone can use. There is no need to get permissions from anyone or to put extra effort to get it when something is God's.")

From line 1 to 6, SAZ introduces the problem which occurred during breakfast as the topic.

Within these prolonged telling turns, she applies some conversational elements such as emphasis, rising intonation (↑git/go), louder voice (↑HEP HAS BEYE Mİ DANIŞACA::K?

(Will we ask for his permission for everything?), and so on. The form of message delivery in this line is of importance as "analysis of message form- how things are said" can reveal the "depth and adequacy of the elliptical art that is talk." (Hymes, 1974: p.54-55).

After this prolonged narrative turn by SAZ that functions as gossip initiation, DON, in line 7, self-selects as the next speaker and shows her agreement making an additional comment/criticism about the gossiped about topic, which, as the second most common means of showing agreement, was discussed earlier in Section 4.2.3.2 of this chapter. Following this gossip initiation and agreement pair, TEAH as the second listener self-selects in line 10, and expresses her disagreement with the point. The first signal to her dispreferred response is the turn initial =ama (but) which shows that what is to follow will not be on the same line with the

previous two speakers. Line 10 is not a meaningfully constructed sentence considering the repetitions and abrupt stops which shows her struggle to take the turn as DON overlaps with her. In lines 12 and 13, she makes her point, and refers to the rules/ orders the staff has to obey to defend them against being talked about negatively for how they behave. LUT's turn initial hedging [ya: (well)] in the next turn proves the analytical observation that TEAH's comment is taken as a dispreferred response by the gossip initiator, SAZ. This sequence goes on in the same manner, the residents support SAZ's point and try to convince TEAH.

3- Disagreement with an Extra (Positive) Point about Gossipee:

In some of the extracts, when an absent third party is being gossiped about, one of the listeners may not agree with the gossip topic referring to another issue about the gossipee that makes the gossip point irrelevant, or wrong. This sometimes comes in the form of giving an anecdote of what happened earlier, or mentioning another (sometimes positive) characteristic of the gossiped about person to defend her/him. The following extract is taken from a conversation sequence between SUL, MUS, FIT and AYS who are talking about an absent resident, ARI, and her eating drinking habits in a neutral way. As has been discussed in the literature review chapter of this thesis, although some scholars define gossip as talking about someone in their absence even if it is positive, negative or neutral, this thesis does not consider neutral talk-about as gossip. So, for this sequence, the interaction becomes gossip when SUL, in line 1, proposes ARI's interest in men as the reason for her bad eating habits.

Extract 14:

- 1 SUL : öyle erkeklere bakıyo:: ↑ekmek- (0.3) ba- yemiyo yemek
always men look bread eat food
 2 yemiyo.
eat
"She always looks at man, doesn't eat her bread, doesn't eat any food."
 3 (1.6)
 4 SUL : ↑balı önüne goysan bırakıyo ↓öyle
honey before put leave like that
"If you put honey before her, she leaves it like that."
(She doesn't eat even when she is offered the best food.)
 5 (1.9)
 6 SUL : zıkım yiyeççe* ye de öyle bak?=
poison eat* eat and then look
"You fool, eat first, and then look at the men."

7 MUS := °ehe°
8 SUL :erkek sana ne gadar (datlı)?
man you so cute
"You like men a lot."
9 FIT : ne bakıyon hem de kim [↑var da]
why look also who is there
"Why do you look? And also who is there?" (Questions directed to absent gossipee.)
→10 AYS : <[aklı] ↑baş[ında] mı ki bakalım
sane Q I don't know
11 MUS : [kim?]
"Who?"
12 AYS : [datlı] olsun? [(soro:z)>]
cute be
"I don't know if she is sane enough to think they are cute."
13 MUS : [hı]
"What?"
14 FIT : [ariye?]
((name of gossipee))
15 SUL : [(inaudible)] aklı başında ↑kele
"((Inaudible)) Come on, she is sane."
(* the term "zıkkım yiyeççe" (literally translated as "may you eat poison") is an idiom that indicates anger with the person's eating habits and is used as a means of criticism.)

In this extract SUL initiates gossip in line 1, "She always looks at man, doesn't eat her bread, doesn't eat any food." The 1.6 second long silence after this explicit gossip initiation can be read as the first signal for dispreferred response (non-agreement) from the listeners, but it cannot be claimed for sure as this data set has a grand total of incidences where long silences in assessment sequences are followed by agreement contrary to the common findings in literature. (Pomerantz, 1984). In this extract, the next turns also support this initial observation though. After this open-to-debate silence, SUL retakes the turn and expands on her previous comment. She initiates her turn with a rising intonation and utters the word ↑bal (honey) in an emphasized manner. In Turkish, honey is used in various idioms and proverbs as a representative of valuable food that cannot be rejected. However, in this interaction, her expansion with an idiomatic item does not still elicit any response for another 1.9 seconds. In line 6, SUL takes the floor once again, and this time makes use of a stronger idiomatic expression *zıkkım yiyeççe**. After this point, one of the listeners orients to her for the first time. It is MUS with a minimal laughter in a silenced manner = °ehe°. Earlier in this chapter, laughter is categorised under the agreement tools, but it should be noted here that they are

examples of both prolonged laughter with a high pitch, and also the “next turn proof procedure” works on their definition as an agreement marker (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998: p.15). However, as the next lines do not have any clues about this silent minimal laughter is treated as an agreement, the closest analysis of this turn will be “it occurs as a response to the harsh idiom” which is not expected in such contexts (This analysis may be biased as it is based on the analyst’s ethnographic knowledge about the language and the culture .)

In line 8, SUL continues her comments about ARI’s interest in men, and gets her first preferred response in line 9 from FIT who directs her judgemental questions to the absent gossipee “*Why do you look? And also who is there?*” Overlapping with the end of this first agreement turn, AYS interrupts FIT and defends ARI referring to an extra point about her mental health “*I don’t know if she is sane enough to think they are cute.*” Therefore, she has mental issues, and should not be criticised about her behaviours. This is an explicit manner of disagreement with the gossip topic, and the speaker here takes one step further to defend the absent third person. Through the next two lines, MUS shows his ignorance to the identity of the gossipee. In line 15, SUL orients to AYS’ disagreement and responds to her with a denial of the offered excuse for ARI’s behaviours. For the rest of the extract, SUL and AYS keep their stances and discuss this issue for longer.

4- Dis/Non-agreement with A Religious or Moral Reference:

Morality and religion are two crucial concepts in the data set used in this research, closely interwoven and frequently mis-substituted which has been described in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis and will be further discussed in Section 6.3. Although the two terms may cover some concurrent elements, the participants in this research use the two concepts interchangeably; probably because of the value religion has in the community, and of the cultural heritage that teaches moral elements as part of religion rather than teaching those as part of a shared value system among all humanity.

This extract is post expansion to an earlier gossip sequence where MUN, SUL, FAT and one of the staff members are gossiping about ZAH, and criticising her on the point that she wants to visit his mentally disabled son in another institution often. MUN is the initiator of gossip and the other three agree that ZAH should not be allowed to see his son this often. They claim that if she liked him so much, she would have stayed with him rather than leaving him. At this point, LUT

interrupts the conversation and defends ZAH against the gossip by means of explaining the rule that ZAH is not allowed to stay in the institution where her son stays as her mental state is normal, and similarly he is not allowed to stay at her institution as he is young for the age requirements of an old people's home. (See Part 2 of this section for disagreement with reference to a rule or situation out of control of the gossipee.) After a prolonged discussion on if it is normal for ZAH to miss her child (LUT's standpoint), or if she should not be allowed to see him every day as she has indirectly accepted the limitations of staying at a government institution which should limit the number of visits she has to his son (MUN's standpoint).

Extract 15:

- 1 LUT : ↑herkes herkese bi ↑laf buluyo? bi ↑la:- bla- (0.4) şey
everybody everybody a rumor find a sth
- 2 ↑dakiyo ↑anasını satıyım bu nasıl dünya gı?=
find fault damn it this how world
"Everyone rumours about everyone else, rumo-, and finds faults of each other. Damn it! What kind of a world is this?"
- 3 FAT :=he::: ne biliyim ↓ben (inaudible)
yes how know I
"Yes. I don't know. (inaudible)"
- 4 (6.4)
- 5 DON : ↑dünyanın ne suçu var? ↑adamlarda suç
world what fault there is men fault
"It is not the world's fault, it is the men's (humanbeings') fault."
- 6 (1.6)
- 7 DON : ↑allah korkusu yok, kulu korkusu yok. (0.4) ↑büyük yok,
allah fear neg. man fear neg. senior neg.
- 8 küçük yok
junior neg.
"There is no fear either from God or from humanbeings. There is no respect for seniors."
- 9 (2.4)
- 10 DON : (inaudible) ↑iftira söylüyo, ↑yalan söylüyo, (0.5) ↑goo
calumniate lie gossip
- 11 gaybet?
detract
"They (people in general) calumniate, lie, gossip, detract."
- 12 (5.2)
 (SAZ agrees later on mentioning other social norms such as being respectful to the husband)

While there is still a conflict, LUT takes the turn in line 1 in a tone as if she was talking to herself but is obviously audible to everyone else in the conversation. She frequently uses rising intonation and sometimes questioning tone to elicit response from the other parties in talk. After structural and intonational question *bu nasıl dünya gı? = (What kind of a world is this?)* in the second line of her turn, FAT latches with LUT, with a prolonged *=he :: (yes)* at turn initial position. This prolonged *yes* without hesitation indicates that FAT has changed her stance for the gossipee as she was one of the gossipers initially. The 6.4 second silence in line 4 is not clear for the analyst, because there is no audio clue about what is happening during that long pause all that is heard is silence. Based on the experience from other recordings, they probably disengaged from the talk without any verbal clues and turned to their tea and knitting work. DON, who has been silent throughout the exchanges of gossip and conflict, self-selects at line 5, and orients to the question in turn final position. She starts her turn with a rising intonation and her turn functions as an SPP of the minimal pair initiated by LUT. She nominates human beings as the main problem resource. No one takes on for 1.6 seconds, and she retakes the turn to explain why she thinks it is the human beings to be blamed. It is because *↑allah korkusu yok, kulu korkusu yok. (0.4) ↑büyük yok, küçük yok (There is no fear either from God or from man. There is no respect for seniors.)* The first part of her turn explains her fixation in relation to religion. People are believed to keep away from misbehaviours because of their fear of God. The second part refers to a cultural, moral norm which makes it necessary for the juniors to respect the seniors, because talking about others is a disrespectful behaviour. In her final turn, she lists the sinful behaviours that religion forbids which are *calumniate, lie, gossip, detract*.

5- “Don’t gossip!” as A Dis/Non-agreement Marker:

As much as gossip as a concept occurs in the corpus used for this research, gossip as a word itself occurs often, too. It mainly occurs in two ways. One is gossip as the topic of gossip, where absent parties are talked about on their gossipy characters. This is going to be analysed and discussed in Section 5.1., where the main topic of gossip is gossipy people. However in this section, the labelling of a behaviour as *gossip* will be handled. That is when someone in interaction initiates a gossip, one of the listeners labels this talk as gossip, and shows her non/dis-agreement by telling the people not to gossip.

This extract begins from the end of the story through which DON initiates the gossip. Before these end of story turns, the other listeners show their agreement and orientation with active listenership tokens such as expressions of surprise *a : ama : : n* etc. This section aims to highlight the part from line 8 where MEL uptakes talk as gossip and rejects to join the gossip.

Extract 16:

- 1 DON :↑o ona o da ona derken, h- topal da v- ↑herif de vardım,
she her she her while crippled man go
- 2 ↑bi de ben ↑vurdum ↓diyo
one too I kick say
"While she (GUL) hit her (FATM) and she (FATM) hit her (GUL) back, the crippled, the man says 'I went and I hit her once too.'"
- 3 (1.5)
- 4 DON :>↑avradın golunu sıkmış üzüm vermiyon diyin ↓diyo<=
wife arm pinch grape give because say
"He says 'She pinched my wife's arm because she didn't give her grapes'"
- 5 TEA :=oy:::
 ((Empathy exclamation))
- 6 (0.7)
- 7 DON : bu nası boğaz [avra::t? köpeğin oluyum* °uf::°]
this how appetite pal dog be (idiom)*
"What kind of an appetite is this pal? (She is so greedy)"
- 8 MEL : [↑kele noreca:n ↑gaybet etme] sus ↑olmuş
well whatever gossip neg shush happen
- 9 geçmiş geldi geçti=
past over now
"Well, whatever. Shush, don't gossip. It happened and past, it is over now."
- 10 DON :=↑geçmiş ↑olsun dedim de, ↑böyle oldu bacım ↓diyo=
sorry to hear say and so happen sister say
"I told him I was sorry to hear what happened and he told me what happened."
- 11 TEAM :=he: yok yo- öyle dedikodu ↑yapmaz [don teyze] don teyzem
well no n- gossip neg. DON aunt DON my aunt
"Well, no no, aunt DON, my aunt DON doesn't gossip."
- 12 DON : [↑ha:: °yok yok°]
"Well, no no."

(* "köpeğin oluyum", literally translated as "may I be your dog" is an idiom commonly used to beg someone. In this context, the idiom is used to beg for the listener's understanding or empathy, shows how desperate and critical she is for GUL's greediness.)

At the beginning of this extract, DON is in the middle of telling the story of a fight between two women (FATM and GUL) in the institution. In lines 1 and 2, she adds the bit where FATM's husband joins the fight and kicks the other woman. While nominating the man, she first addresses him *topal* (crippled) then repairs herself by changing the address to *↑herif* (man) with rising intonation to emphasize the repair. Because the man is not crippled, his wife is and people in the institution call her the crippled woman from her behind. Line 3 is a TRP where any of the listeners can pick up and comment on the story, but no one does in spite of her falling tone showing the end of the story. Following this no orientation from the listeners, DON retakes the turn and expands more on the story in a faster talk than the previous turn and finishes in a falling intonation. TEA in line 5 latches with the end of the turn and uses a stretched empathy exclamation *=oʏ: : .* Following TEA's sign of uptake of the story telling, DON changes her tone from neutral to evaluative in line 7 where she implies that GUL is *greedy* as she kicked FATM just because she did not share her food. Only when DON changes from neutrality to evaluation that MEL comes in to reject the gossip. She explicitly labels DON's talk as gossip, and shows her non agreement. Right after this direct opposition directed to her, DON takes the turn and explains that she is not gossiping, just telling the story he told when she said she was sorry to hear the incident. This line shows that the participants in this research see gossip in different ways, and it affects the way they treat the gossip they initiate versus the ones initiated by others. As is discussed all through this thesis, this approach illustrates the negative connotation given to gossip by the participants, and their tendency to avoid labelling their talk as 'gossip'. Particularly this example indicates that her concept of gossip excludes passing stories heard directly from the gossiped about person. In line 11, TEAM supports DON and shows her disagreement with MEL's labelling. She takes the matter to a more general manner, and tells a general characteristic of DON, "*my aunt DON doesn't gossip.*" The self-repair by TEAM in this line, where she changes the form of address from *aunt DON* to '*my*' *aunt DON* shows the defending role TEAM takes at this conversation. This short extract exemplifies how all the participants in the conversation agree on the fact that gossip is a dispreferred action, but the definition of the concept gossip varies a lot from one person to another.

4.3. Sequence Closing

The data set used for this research shows that, although this is not valid in all cases, most often the end of a gossip sequence is not a smoothly identifiable phenomenon because of two main reasons. One is, sometimes the gossip initially comes to an end, but is reoffered as the topic of conversation even after a long insert expansion on a different topic. The second is, most gossip sequences are followed by second, third or even more gossip(s) about the same person on a different topic, or a different person on the same topic. This section of the thesis aims to analyse the most common five types of endings in order to answer the research question of ‘How is the gossip ended?’ The most common way the participants apply to end a gossip sequence is to add up a next gossip, either about the same gossipee on a different topic, or a different gossipee on the same topic, or an entirely new topic. The next common reason to end a gossip sequence is the outside effects such as the arrival of the gossipee, the researcher, or a staff member. Another type of sequence ending follows a ‘pass by’ item such as *whatever, I don’t care, I don’t know* from the listener, where the indication of lack of agreement can bring the gossip to an early ending. The most interesting type of gossip ending is the one that occurs without any indication or signal to an end, because it is hard to explain the reason for it. The last one to be covered in this section is the gossip ending achieved through a moral/religious lesson by means of a proverb.

4.3.1. Second Gossip

The most frequently observed type of gossip ending is the adding another gossip to the initial one. Similar to the case of adding second stories in narrative sequences such as complaints (Selting, 2012), gossip is also treated like story-telling and, generally but not always, the listeners add a next gossip to the first one. From that point, all the listeners, and the gossiper herself orients to this new gossip and the previous one ends there. This generally occurs when the first one is already talked about and almost finished although not verbally indicated. So the next gossip initiator waits till the previous one to be used up before s/he initiates the next one. The added up gossip occurs in three ways in terms of the subject and the topic. In the first one, the second gossip is about the same gossipee as the first gossip, but is around another aspect of him/her. In the other type, the gossipee is a different person with the same gossippable aspect as the gossipee in the first one. The last one is about both a different person and a different topic. In the following extract, LUT, SAZ, DON, and TEAH are talking about NUR’s daughter-in-law

and how quarrelsome she is. LUT tells a memory of hers with NUR's daughter-in-law, when she intervened into an argument between the two. Following the gossip about NUR's daughter-in-law, LUT talks about her character and changes the gossip from NUR's daughter-in-law to her own daughters-in-law. This extract is followed by a second gossip sequence initiated by LUT about her daughters-in-law and how bad-tempered they are.

Extract 17:

- 1 (1.5)
2 LUT :↑nurin gelini
" *NUR's daughter-in-law.* "
3 (1.1)
4 LUT :gelirdi gavga ederdi ah bana [şunu yaptı, ah bana bunu]
come argue oh me that do oh me this
5 SAZ : [ama ↑gardaşının kızıy:mış.]
but brother's daughter
"But she is her brother's daughter."
6 LUT :yaptı, ah şöyle yaptı, [ah boyle] ↑yaptı=
do oh such do oh such do
"She used to come and argue with her complaining 'Oh she did this to me, she did that to me, she did such and such...'"
7 DON : [°ya::°]
"Ah so!"
8 TEAH :=↑cahil işte cahil insan? (0.8) napacaksın
ignorant see ignorant person what/do
"Ignorant, see, an ignorant person. What can you do?"
9 LUT : (inaudible)
10 (2.1)
11 LUT : ↑BEN (.) ters adamım ↑annem (0.5) iyiliğime gelince çok
I moody person honey good when very
12 iyiyimdir ama <benim telime dokandı ↑mı> (0.4) BEN CANAVAR
kind but make me angry if I monster
13 kesilirim. ayağımdaki ↑kan b- tepeme çıkar.
become feet blood head run
"I am a moody person, honey. When I am good, I am very kind. But if someone makes me angry, I become a monster (dangerous). I get livid."
14 (1.0)
15 LUT :↑hi:ç o an ↑kimseyi tanımam
never thereupon no one listen to
"Thereupon, I don't listen to anyone, no one can ever stop me."
16 (2.1)
17 SAZ : (inaudible?)=
18 LUT :=↑vallahi tanımam? (0.7) ↑ADAMIN SÜLALEYMİŞ, (.) ↑BENİM

19 **I swear listen to husband's family my**
 SÜLALEMMİŞ, (0.3) benim için hi:ç farketmez. (1.1)
Family me for no difference
 20 >susturdum susturdum susturamadım ağzına burnuna girerim?<
shut up shut up if not mouth nose beat
"I swear I don't listen to anyone. It doesn't make any difference for me if it is my husband's family or my family. If I can shut them up, I do. If not, I beat them.
 21 SAZ : h:h-
 22 (1.3)
 23 LUT : <AMA (0.4) ŞU OLDU Kİ HAYATIMDA ŞU VAR, (1.0)
but this happen my life this there is
 →24 ELİN kızına* yapılmıyomuş.>
stranger's daughter* do/neg.
"But, what happened in my life is that, you can't do the same to your daughter-in-law."
 25 (0.6)
 26 ALL : hihihihhi (giggling)
 27 SAZ : hihi \$niye onları döğmedin?\$ hihhi
why them beat
"Why didn't you beat them?"
 (*The idiom 'A stranger's daughter' can mean 'daughter-in-law' depending on the context. Next gossip sequence is about LUT's daughter-in-law in this context.)

Prior to this extract, the gossip about NUR's daughter-in-law has already been initiated by LUT and she has told the story. Then, in the first line of this extract is a 1.5 second silence. It is heard as a full silence, and nothing audible is present in the recording, but obviously there is a clarification request by one of the listeners that is responded by LUT in line 2, where she repeats who they have been talking about (i.e. the gossipee). After the clarification, there is another long silence for 1.1 second which is followed by LUT retelling the gossip. At some point in LUT's long turn in lines 4 and 6, DON's comment about their relationship overlaps with LUT. None of the participants in the conversation orient to this extra information about the gossipee, so it is not possible to deduce "why it there" in CA terms. Through the end of LUT's turn, there is another minimal overlap by DON and she silently utters an active listenership token [°ya::°] (Ah so!). In line 8, the third listener, TEAH, latches with LUT and responds to LUT's initiation adding up another point about the gossipee, =cahil (ignorant). (See Section 4.2.3.2. for additional comment, information or criticism about the gossipee.).

From line 9 on, where everyone else in the conversation could take the turn, LUT self-selects, and after an inaudible comment and 2.1 second silence, she initiates a long turn about her

characteristic features. The intonation on the turn initial \uparrow BEN (I) followed by a minimal pause puts extra emphasis on what she is going to say, and no one of the interactants interrupt her. Talking about oneself within a gossip sequence is a common strategy adopted to back up the gossip topic. LUT from line 11 to 13 does this by using affective telling strategies such as rising-falling intonations, more loud sounds accompanied by emphasis on the word etc. There are long silences in lines 14 and 16, which are obviously TRPs anyone could comment on LUT's doing being the authority. However, the listeners do not orient to it until line 17 where SAZ says something inaudible in a questioning tone, which is quickly responded by LUT's emphasized $=\uparrow$ vallahi (I swear), and expands further on her telling about self with the same conversational elements. After LUT mentions beating people if she cannot shut them up at her turn final, SAZ, in line 21 starts a laughter but cuts it short which is obvious from the abrupt stop in her articulation. This unexpected stop could be interpreted as a consequence of LUT's doing being the authority with her angry and threatening manner in the last part of the conversation, but it cannot be claimed with CA perspective as the next turn does not have any components to support this initial analysis.

The main point this section is interested in starts from line 23. Until 23, LUT tells about how she argued with NUR's daughter-in-law, she expands on her moody character that explains why she interfered with their family issues. From this point, she changes the topic and initiates a second gossip about her own daughters-in-law. She initiates the change of topic with a pretelling in line 23, $<\uparrow$ AMA (0.4) \uparrow ŞU OLDU Kİ HAYATIMDA ŞU VAR, (1.0) (*But, what happened in my life is that (1.0)*). This line acts as a "pre-telling response forecast" (Crow, 1988: p.31), and signals a change with many of its features such as a change in the pitch, the higher volume, emphasis on some words and the following 1.0 second silence which is not a TRP, which signals something important is coming. Then in line 24 comes the new gossip topic, \uparrow ELİN kızına* yapılmıyomuş.> (*you can't do the same to your daughter-in-law.*) This line is the initiation of the follow up gossip about her own daughter-in-law. The lexical choice in this sentence, addressing the gossipee as a 'stranger's daughter' rather than her own 'daughter-in-law' is a way of othering the person, and shows her evaluative stance towards that person. In Turkish there are two translations for daughter-in-law. One is 'gelin' and it is neutral, the other more colloquial one is 'stranger's daughter' as in this example, and it has a negative connotation. From this line

onwards, a second gossip sequence about LUT's daughters-in-law and their family problems with participation from the others in the talk.

4.3.2. Arrival of an Outsider/Gossipee

All types of conversations cannot and should not be considered separate elements from the context it takes place. Gossip sequences are no exception to this, they are also affected by outside effects such as the arrival of an unwanted visitor or the gossipee him/herself. Arrival of an outsider is the second most common ending for the gossip sequences in the data set used for this research. In the following example, a crowded group of residents sit around two separate tables and gossip about MUN across the tables. Some people narrate their memories with her to show how mean she is even though she is one of the residents with the highest income. Then, the others agree to their remarks through second narratives or signs of agreement. None of the participants show their disagreement or lack of agreement with the gossip; and no one orients to this as new information, everyone is on the same page on the gossip topic. The following extract shows how one of the longest gossip sequences in the data (around 18 minutes) end.

Extract 18:

- 1 MUS : tavuk etini yidi de nası °\$otu\$ru\$ge\$ [\$du\$tu\$ldu\$° hihih]
chicken meat eat and how diarrhoea have
"Remember she ate chicken and had diarrhoea."
- 2 FATM : [↑hehehehehehehe]
- 3 .hhh heheh
- 4 (0.5)
- 5 MUS : ↑aynı şey gibi şo: zebani* gibi işte? ehe-
just that like that dragon* like see
"Just like that one, like that dragon (ZAH), see. Ehe."
- 6 (2.8)
- 7 MUS : ↑aynı şo:nun gibi:? ehe-
just that ike
"Just like that one."
- 8 (0.9)
- 9 MUS : ilden olsa iyice yir zebani [ehe-]
s.o. else when a lot eat dragon
"Dragon eats a lot when it (the food) is offered by someone else, ehe."
- 10 FAT : [↑gı::z] ↑taze hemşire::?=
hey girl new nurse
"Hey girl! New(comer) nurse!" (FAT calls out for the newly employed nurse as 'new nurse' as a means of address

because she doesn't know her name yet.)

11 FIT : hehe

12 MUS : \$hemşire::\$ [ehe-]
 "Nurse! Ehe."

13 SAZ : [°taze] hemşire°
 "New nurse."

14 FAT : hihi[hihi]hihi

15 FIT : [↑eski:::]
 "Old!"

16 FATM : hahaha

17 SAZ : \$adın neyse de\$
name what say
 "You should say 'What is your name?'"

18 FAT : ↑gı:z adın ney gel gı:z
hey girl name what come girl
 "Hey girl! What is your name? Come here girl!"
 (*zebani (dragon) is a nickname they use to refer to ZAH)

The last fifteen minutes preceding this extract covers a prolonged gossip sequence about MUN. Throughout this sequence, the gossipee is the same person, but the gossip topics change amongst some of her bad characteristics such as meanness, greediness, etc. In this last part, MUS, in line 1, is sharing an anecdote to show his agreement to the topic of her greediness for food initiated by another speaker earlier. He makes fun of her implying that she had it because she ate too much. He uses humour with a smiling voice in the last part of his turn, and laughter in turn final position. These two conversational elements serve as an invitation to laughter from the listener (Jefferson, 1979), responded by FATM with a relatively long overlapping laughter in the next turn. After FATM's attended laughter, there is a silence for 0.5 second followed by MUS self-selecting as the next speaker with a turn-initial emphasized comparative word. In this line, MUS introduces another resident in the institution *that dragon* (ZAH) with a similar character to MUN to the gossip sequence. Comparison is one of the most common phenomenon in gossip sequences. When people gossip about someone, they either introduce someone else who has that gossipable feature to the conversation, or compare the gossipee with themselves to praise themselves. (Suls, 1977; Wert & Salovey, 2004). This phenomenon of comparison is covered and discussed in more detail in the discussion chapter of this thesis. In this extract, the former type of comparison is present, and MUS compares MUN and ZAH (zebani) in terms of similarity in their greediness. The form of address he uses here is contextually relevant because he uses a negative nickname to address the new person he introduces, harmonious with the conversation being gossip. He has a minimal laughter initiation that he cuts early in turn final

position after the comparison. There is a 2.8 second silence after the comparison. MUS' next turn shows that he treats this silence as a possible hearing problem and repairs himself by repeating what he said with a questioning tone to elicit a response this time. However, there is another silence for 0.9 seconds, and following that, MUS expands on this explaining the similarity which is that ZAH (zebani) also likes others' food like MUN does. He initiates a laughter at the end of this turn, too *ehe-*, which is overlapped by FAT's orientation to an outsider who arrived in the scene. In line 10, she calls out for one of the newcomer staff members who has arrived at the common room they are chatting [*↑g1::z*] *↑taze hemşire::?= (Hey girl! New (comer) nurse!)*. After this turn, everyone in the conversation orients to this change of topic, and the previous 15+ minute long gossip ends with the arrival of an outsider. As has been mentioned in the introduction to this section, this is the second most common gossip ending type.

4.3.3. Dismissal: *ama::n*

The next common way how a gossip sequence ends is through a word or idiom that functions as a dismissal, which can be translated as *never mind, I don't care, I don't know, whatever, okay* and so on. In gossip talk, these dismissals can be produced by one of the listeners, right after the gossip initiation, or by the initiator when the initiation gets dispreferred response, or from either of them at the end of a long gossip sequence. The following is an example of a pass by from a listener right after the initiation. Until this given extract, the topic of sequence is MUJ's health and the accident she recently had. In the previous part of the sequence, the participants (LUT, DON, MUN, and SAZ) are neutral and they share with each other the information they have about the accident. The gossip starts from line 5.

Extract 19:

- 1 LUT : *salata yapıyomuş ↑herhalda,*
 salad make probably
 "Probably she was making salad."
- 2 DON : °↑hm:°
- 3 LUT : *salata yaparkene düşmüş.*
 salad make fall down
 "She fell down while she was making salad."
- 4 (1.3)
- 5 DON : *↑boğazına hiç ↑fırsat vermiyo?=*
 apetite never neglect
 "She never neglects her appetite. (Eats a lot.)"

6 SAZ :=burdaa salatayı da alıyordu onun üstüne koyodu,
here salad too take that add
"She would take the salad here and would add more to that."

7 (4.6)

8 SAZ [↑allahı::m allahım gurban oluyum* (inaudible)]
my god my god sacrifice myself*
*"My God, my God. I will sacrifice myself for you."**

→9 LUT :[aman ↑ne yediyse de ne giydiyse de ↑banane] ↑ya:
never mind what eat what wear I don't care
 10 herkes yediyse s- (0.7) sırtına giyer, gi- ↑yediyse karnına
someone eat on put eat stomach
 11 yer banane?=
eat I don't care
*"Never mind. I don't care what she ate or what she wore.
 Whatever someone eats it warms her- (tongue slip) whatever
 she eats, it fills her up, I don't care!"*

12 SAZ :=↑öyle ya °bize ne ↓ilişik°
right we don't care
"That is right. We don't care."

13 (0.7)

14 SAZ : şuraya bugünn aha iki ↑üç çeşit yemek geldi. allah
here today two three different dish come god

15 var. (0.4) ↑daha fazla (0.9) bi tek çorba yedim
know more only soup have
*"God knows, two three different dishes came here today,
 even more. I only had soup."*

(* 'My God, I will sacrifice myself for you' is an idiom that is used in variable places in a conversation, but is separate from that conversation. It is a means to show one thinks of God even when she is busy with talking, or any other activity. It generally does not have a function in the conversation, and is not oriented by any of the parties. Like an inner self-talk.)

In line 1, LUT shares her neutral knowledge about the accident without adding any evaluative element to it the way the others did in the previous part of the conversation. Then, DON gives a minimal listenership token in a silent manner to LUT's telling. LUT's next turn where she repeats what she last said signals that she heard DON's minimal °↑hm: ° as a clarification request although it was clearly heard as a listenership token. This self-repair can also be because of a non-verbal clarification request by another listener, but the analyst cannot claim that as the data is limited to audio recordings. However, this does not make a significant change to the overall analysis, so is enough to mention both possibilities instead of making definitive judgements. After LUT's repetition, there is a 1.3 second silence which is relevant for a transition of speaker, and is taken by SAZ in line 5. DON self-selects and takes the turn with a

rising intonation and makes the first evaluative comment "*She never neglects her appetite.*" which idiomatically means 'She eats a lot.' This turn by DON initiates the gossip. Latching DON's evaluative remark, SAZ shows her agreement with the gossip by adding up extra critical comment (See 4.2.3.2. for additional comment, information, and criticism as a way of agreement). After this quick initiation- agreement pair, there is a 4.6 second silence which signals a possibly dispreferred, disagreement in this case, SPP. (See starred explanation for line 8). In line 9, LUT takes the turn with a pass by in turn-initial position [*aman* (*never mind*)], then inserts an explanation to the turn that whatever she does not care. The first part of her turn is overlapped with SAZ's gap filling idiom, so LUT paraphrases what she said in the second part of her turn. The significant point here is that turn- initial and turn-finals in LUT's turn are both dismissals, *aman* (*never mind*) in initial position and *banane?*= (*I don't care*) in final. LUT's attempt to end the gossip is oriented by SAZ right after, and she first directly agrees with her rejection to gossip =*ı̂öyle ya* (*that is right*), and then echoes what LUT has just said changing from LUT's self-identity indicator first person singular language to collective identity marker of first person plural *biz* (*we*) to show her agreement. The gossip ends here and from line 14 onwards, the talk goes on around their own eating habits and how little they eat. It turns out that eating less is appreciated more. This is again an example how people use comparisons to praise themselves which, as has already been stated, will be discussed in the discussion chapter of this thesis.

4.3.4. Ending with a Minimal Response

The gossip sequences are sometimes closed with no verbal indication of ending or with minimal agreement tokens. This way of ending is valid when the gossip sequence is built up with conflict between the participants. In gossip talk, what this study refers to as conflict is the contexts where there is strong opposition to the gossip initiator and it leads to a discussion between at least two parties. In such argumentative gossip cases, the conflict ends either with one of the conflicting participants leaving the place physically before they come to an agreement, or by one of them showing a minimal agreement token which does not act as an agreement when the next turn is considered. However, the gossip sequence ends when either of these happens.

The following extract is an example to both where the member of the conflicting side both shows an agreement at minimal level, and leaves the argument physically. This is the last part of a long

gossip sequence initiated by one of the staff members, KAD, who talks negatively about the researcher's way of dressing. While SAZ, DON, MEL and MUN agree with him and advise him not to get married to a woman like her, LUT disagrees with KAD when he changes the topic of gossip to the gossipee's parents and blames them for her behaviours. This is where the conflict begins.

Extract 20:

- 1 KAD :kınamıyom da onun [°anasına babasına suç buluyom°]
decry/neg but her [mother father I blame]
"I don't decry but I blame her mother and father."
- 2 LUT : [hah ana baba ne yapsın.]
[yes mom dad what do]
"Yes, what can parents do?"
- 3 DON : [böy- ye büyük ye de büyük ↑konuşma]
[bi- eat big eat but big talk/neg]
"Don't make big promises that you cannot keep."
(Things are not always under your control and you might end up breaking your promise.)
- 4 (0.6)
- 5 KAD :na:[psın olur mu canım?]
"How can't they (parents) do anything"
- 7 (1.0)
- 8 KAD :doğrudur. ((leaves))
allright.
"Allright."
- 9 (4.0)

After a long gossip about the researcher, the initiator, KAD, brings about another angle to the talk by introducing the parents to be blamed, where he faces the disagreement from LUT. Line 1 is a later turn after the beginning of conflict, and until this point there are a lot of exchanges between the two, LUT is defending the parents saying that the new generation does not follow their parents, so she disagrees with his idea and tells him not to decry her parents as someone who decries another person is believed to face the same problem in their lives. In line 1, KAD responds to her advice and says that he does not decry, but blames them. The end of his turn is overlapped by two speakers, LUT and DON simultaneously. Multiple overlaps are common in conflict talk (Hutchby, 1992). In line 2, the second one of three overlapping turns, LUT shows her disagreement with KAD again by asking a rhetorical question to his comment about parents (*what can parents do?*) Similarly in line 3, SAZ gives the same advice LUT has given him prior to this part of the extract, [böy- ye büyük ye de büyük ↑konuşma]

(Don't make big promises that you cannot keep.) At the beginning of her turn, she cuts her first word because of the overlap, but then quickly resolves the overlap by means of a cut-off and restart in the same line. Following this overlapping turn between three participants, there is a silence of 0.6 seconds. After the silence, in line 5, KAD takes the turn, picks LUT's turn as FPP and orients to that one and questions LUT's approach to the problem. However, following the silence in line 4, which could be assumed to be short in non-conflict exchanges but is long for a conflict talk, LUT interrupts right after KAD takes the turn and talk goes overlapped again. She elaborates on her defence of the parents in her previous turn and makes her identity as an old person relevant by referring to the researcher's being a member of *the new generation*. In this line, she also takes the topic from one single gossipee to a generalisation about whole generation of people. Her generalisation is followed by a 1.0 second long silence, which signals a dispreferred response the genre of talk considered, as has been explained. In contrast to the expected disagreement, KAD in line 8 gives a minimal response, which looks preferred (agreement) at lexical level, but does not function as an agreement in talk. While saying this, he also leaves the place of argument and the conflict gossip ends. As has been explained earlier, this type of no-ending indication, or minimal agreement (!) is the most common way a piece of gossip with strong conflict ends. Conflict in gossip sequences is very rarely resolved in the data set used for this research, but is often ended this way.

4.3.5. Endings with the Proverb/Lesson/Sum up

Proverbs are commonly used in gossip sequences in various positions. Silverman argues that proverbs terminate a sequence because of a failure in agreement (1998, p.8), but in this data set, it can either be agreed or disagreed when placed in the end of a sequence. In end position, they sum up the gossip topic by giving a moral lesson. This contradiction of giving a moral lesson through/within a morally unacceptable talk, gossip in this case, will be discussed in detail in the discussion chapter of this thesis. A second proverb by another participant following a first proverb, as in stories, is a common phenomenon as a means of showing agreement to the moral lesson. The following extract is an example to this. Prior to the given part of the extract, LUT, SAZ and one of the teachers, TEAH, are gossiping about FAT and her kids and their relations. Just before this part, LUT and SAZ, as residents in the institution and FAT's friends, explain her that FAT stayed with her kids for a while but left their houses because of some problems. Upon

hearing this, TEAH concludes that FAT is to blame as well as her kids.

Extract 21:

- 1 TEAH :↑ama işte:- teyze de baksana°fat teyze de°o kadar şey
 but well aunt too look fat aunt too that thing
- 2 değilmiş yani i:: i- gittiği yerde şey yapıyomuş?
 be/neg i mean er:: go place thing do
 *"But well, look, aunt, aunt FAT is not that well-mannered.
 I mean, she doesn't get on well with the people wherever
 she goes"*
- 3 SAZ :↑onları söylet on-↑bunu AS::, (0.5) bunu söylet onu AS:
 they speak th- this HANG:: (0.5) this speak them HANG:
 *"Make them speak, punish her. Make her speak, punish
 them." (Proverb: No one takes on the blame. Everyone blames
 each other)*
- 4 (0.6)
- 5 LUT :↑suç altın kürk olsa (.) kimse üstüne dakma:z.
 blame golden fur coat be/if(.) no one on put
 *"Even if a blame is a golden fur coat, no one will put it
 on." (Proverb: no one takes the blame on, everyone blames
 each other whatever the problem is.)*
 (From here, LUT changes the topic to her relation with her
 daughter-in-laws and tells how well she behaved to them)

Line 1 is TEAH's response to the earlier information she got about FAT. The turn initial *ama işte:-* (but well) is a hedging mark that indicates an upcoming dispreferred SPP. She refers to the gossipee as teyze (aunt) at first, and then repairs herself adding the name *fat teyze* (aunt fat). In her turn from line 1 to 2, TEAH uses another hedging element, şey (thing) two more times. The first one of them is at the end of line 1, and instead of directly saying that she is not that well-mannered, she softens her talk by using the hedging. Similarly, in line 2, instead of directly saying that she does not get on well with people, TEAH says, she does 'things' where she goes. These two items together with the turn initial hedging show how TEAH softens her strong negative evaluation, as it is not often the case to blame the old people, but the family members when there is a gossip about a resident's children. In the next line, SAZ partly agrees with TEAH's comment with a proverb and summarised how each of the parties blame each other for being guilty in the bad relationship. The way she emphasizes the word AS::, (hang/punish) makes her point stronger. Her (SAZ's) point about no one taking the blame on is oriented to by LUT in line 5 with a secondary proverb with a similar meaning. The use of secondary proverbs is a common phenomenon in gossip endings, a second

participant shows her agreement with the proverb with a similar proverb. Not in this example, but in some of the other examples in the data set, this proverbs come as a summary of the gossip topic, and give a moral lesson to the others such as summing up with *"Too much coyness makes the lover fed up"* at the end of a gossip sequence about someone who acts coyly and does not accept help from the others although she needs it. Or *"A mother is a crown on the head, she is the cure for all sorrows. Even if a child gets a master, s/he still needs his/her mom."* similarly, while some people are gossiping about another resident's problems with her children, and the gossipier is telling the listeners a life lesson about being respectful to their mothers whatever their age or position is. This will be discussed in the discussion chapter in more detail.

4.4. Summary

This chapter has analysed the data to answer the first research question of how the gossip is sequentially organised in terms of initiation, response, and ending. The next analysis chapter will focus on six gossipable topics defined in the data which are, gossip itself, beliefs and morality, family and relations, personality, physical acts, and appearance. The topics will be followed by the last part of this chapter on one single gossip incident identified in the whole data set.

Chapter 5. Analysis of the Content of Gossip: Gossipability

5.0. Introduction

This second analysis chapter seeks answers for the second research question, ‘What are the most common topics of gossip?’, while contributing to the answer of the third question, ‘What are the common contextual features in gossip talk?’, which has had elements in the previous section as well as this one. In this chapter, the most common gossipable topics are listed as (1) gossip as an action, (2) beliefs and morality, (3) family and relations, (4) personality, (5) physical acts, and (6) appearance followed by a section on the only positive gossip incident in the data set.

5.1. Gossip as an Action as the Topic of Gossip

Gossip action as a frequent form of talk, together with the people who perform it (i.e. ‘gossiper’), is one of the most commonly gossiped about topics. That is, participants in this data set gossip about people on their gossip behaviours in a negative way. As it is obvious in the extract below, the concept of gossip in people’s mind differs from the way they perform it in real life. When the topic is gossip, everyone in talk explicitly disapproves of ‘gossip’ as an action on terms that it is morally unacceptable and religiously a sin. However, they show this disapproval through gossiping about the gossipers. This irony is discussed in the discussion chapter under the sections on morality and religion.

The following extract is an example of the mentioned conflict between the ‘ideal’ versus the ‘real’. Prior to this point in talk, LUT tells SAZ that yesterday MEL blamed her (LUT) for gossiping about her (MEL) with DON (with whom MEL previously had an argument). On this issue, LUT tells SAZ how much she is against gossiping, and she neither gossips nor lets anyone gossip. Following this, SAZ tells her second story about gossip from line 1 on.

Extract 22:

- 1 SAZ: =↑valla dünden ben de gızdım.
 honestly yesterday I too get angry
 "Honestly, I got angry yesterday, too."
- 2 (1.6)
- 3 SAZ: >onu bunu °go:luyolardı° şeynen< fat↑nan: don
 some people gossip that/and fat/and don
 "They, that and, FAT and DON were gossiping about some
 people."
- 4 (1.3)

5 SAZ: fata dedim ki zaten sen gocuydun (.) seni biliyom ya
 fat say that already you gossip you know but
 6 °dedim° bu da ↑sana uyuyo °dedim° (1.2) utanmıyonuz mu
 say this too you follow say be ashamed Q
 7 onun bunun konu yapmıya ya? (1.0) doğru sohbetinizi
 some people gossip normal conversation
 8 etseniniz?
 make
 "I said to FAT that 'You are already gossiping (.) I know
 you but this(MEL) is following your example' I said.
 (1.2) Are you not ashamed of gossiping about other
 people? (1.0) Why don't you make your normal
 conversations?"
 9 (0.5)
 10 LUT: yo::
 "No"
 11 (1.4)
 12 SAZ: doğru sohbet de hiç bi ↑allah kelimesi ↑yok
 normal conversation any one allah word there isn't
 13 mu sizde? °dedim°
 Q. you say
 "'Within your normal conversations, why don't you talk
 about Allah,' I said."
 14 (4.5)
 15 SAZ: ↑fatı biliyodum gocuydu ya dedim sen de ona uydun?
 fat know gossip but say you too her follow
 "'I know FAT is a gossip but' I said, 'you are
 following her example, too.'"
 16 (4.0)
 17 LUT : ↑fat zaten çok sever öyle şeyi konuşmayı=
 fat already lot love like that talk
 "FAT already loves talking like that a lot."
 18 SAZ : =↑he:
 "Yes!"
 19 (.)

Following LUT's story about her stance against gossip, SAZ in line 1 initiates a second story about the same topic, gossip, with a pre-telling turn. Following this pre-telling, there is a 1.6 second silence where the listener is expected to give a go ahead response. Following the lack of that response from LUT, SAZ in line 3 retakes the turn and explicitly nominates the two people *fatnan*: don (FAT and DON) who were gossiping (°go:luyolardı°). With this turn, she also makes the topic of their gossip as gossip explicitly. It should be noted here that she produces the word 'gossip' in a more silent manner than the surrounding talk. It is not desirable with a CA perspective to interpret a hidden meaning with this change in volume as it is not

oriented by the next turn, but might still be relevant considering the participants' stance for the activity of gossiping. This put aside, following this explicit nomination of people and action, there is another long silence for 1.3 seconds with no uptake from the listener. After this silence and no response from LUT, SAZ takes the turn once again and reports the details of her story. In line 5, she reports addressing someone as a gossip on face, and compares a second person to the gossip. This long turn of SAZ from line 5 to 8 illustrates her idea about gossip. In line 6, she reveals her idea that gossiping is something to be ashamed of. In this line, it can be interpreted that SAZ is doing being the power by dictating the two gossipers what to do (*Normal conversations*) and what not to do (*gossip*). Since SAZ started telling her story, LUT verbally orients to it for the first time in line 10 with a prolonged agreement token *yo:: (no)*.

LUT's agreement is followed by a 1.4 second silence and then SAZ retakes the turn and elaborates more on her criticism with reference to the lack of religious talk in their conversations. It is worth mentioning here that 'talking about Allah' exists in the language as an idiom that means the right/essential type of talk should include religious elements inside, not sinful ones like gossip or calumny etc. This elaboration is followed by a relatively long silence of 4.5 seconds where transition is relevant but is not up taken by LUT. After the silence, in line 15, SAZ retakes the turn to repeat her initial point ten lines earlier where she renominates FAT as a gossip and DON taking her example, "*I know FAT is a gossip but' I said, 'you are following her example, too.'*". This line is the end of story with sum up. This final summary is followed by a 4.0 second long silence. The long silence normally makes a dispreferred response (Lazaraton, 1997; Bilmes, 1988), but gossip sequences do not fit into this general instance when it comes to long pauses. It can also be followed by a preferred response for the gossip, but the delay in response is about the face problem, the action of gossip being dispreferred itself. Similarly in this example, line 17 following this long pause is an agreement turn by LUT. SAZ's next turn is a strong upgraded agreement latching LUT's agreement in the previous turn. In sum, it can be seen from this extract that people unconsciously use gossip as a genre of talk to evaluate others' gossip behaviours. This phenomenon is discussed deeper and with more angles in the discussion chapter of this thesis.

In line 1, AYS sees one of the female residents of the institution enter the common room from far away, and tells MUS “*That (woman) is picking her (face) hair with tweezers.*” This line in this extract at first sight may look like a neutral reporting turn, but the action it does is gossip initiation as is obvious from MUS’ response where he gives her religious identity as the reason for her behaviour. However, the crucial point to be made here is that the gossipee is Muslim, but from her face hair removal behaviour, which is reported to be forbidden by the prophet Muhammad, MUS makes his own inference and says that she does it “*Because she is not Muslim.*” (çünkü müslüman ↑daal ki ↑o). It should be also noted here that the negation in his turn is uttered in an emphasized manner and rising intonation combined. Following MUS’ turn, there is a 2.3 second silence where both speakers do not take the turn. Then, in line 6, AYS takes the turn to add details to her previous turn. This adding up without a disagreement remark together with the intonation she uses indicates that both parties are on the same page about the gossipee’s behaviour being religiously unacceptable. In line 7, there is another agreement token by MUS where they still are on agreement. MUS’ agreement token is followed by a 0.7 second silence TRP where AYS does not uptake. Then, MUS takes the turn again, this time he shows his agreement to AYS with adding up extra information about the gossipee (see Section 4.2.3.2.) He ends this turn in a questioning intonation, but AYS does not uptake which ends up in a 1.7 seconds silence till he retakes and repairs his indefinite *doing that* to a definite action, *decking herself out*. He uses an emphasized negative adjective pis (nasty) at turn final position to refer to the gossipee as a final evaluative remark. His turn is followed by a short silence and then, the two change the topic from her religiously unacceptable behaviour to a problem she had with AYS recently.

5.3. Family and Relations as the Topic of Gossip

Another common gossip topic for the participants in this study are the relationships with family members or friends. Between the two, family is the more common one. This commonality has its roots in the social structure of the community the institution is placed. As has been mentioned in the literature review chapter, in most parts of Turkey, children are expected to take care of their parents when they get old. Therefore, staying at an old people’s home is not an agreeable end of life decision for most people. It is the same for the participants of this study. In various recordings, the residents are heard to complain about *being left* in an old people’s home. This

being a research topic in itself, it will only be handled from the gossip perspective in this study. Also the occurrence frequency of the most valuable items in the society such as family, morality, religion is an important point that will be handled in the discussion chapter. The results of the analysis indicate that the more valuable something/someone is, the more gossipable it becomes. This extract is taken from an afternoon knitting class in the institution. Prior to this moment in talk, TEAs and LUT are talking about their handicrafts. Then SAZ approaches them and asks for something and leaves the place. While she (SAZ) is walking away, one of the residents, FATO, asks for her help to move. This incident takes 13 seconds and all the speakers are silent (probably watching this happen). Upon seeing FATO's neediness, TEAM initiates a talk about her, and LUT carries the topic to a gossip about FATO's children.

Extract 24:

- 1 TEAM : ama:n yazık ↑ya: (.)°şuna bak° ne halden ne hale, (.)
what a pity this look from what state to what
- 2 >kim bilir eski gençliğinde nasıldı?<=
who know former youth how
"What a pity! Look at her, who would imagine one day she would be like this. Who knows how she was in old times, when she was young."
- 3 LUT : =te::::
 (emotional reaction meaning strong agreement)
- 4 (4.9) (someone walks in)
- 5 LUT : hayalde gör düşte gör demiş, (.) ↑hele de bi
fantasy see dream see say just let
- 6 düş de ↑gör
fall and see
"As the saying goes, see in your fantasies, see in your dreams. Just let yourself fall and then see what happens."
(An) idiomatic expression which means one has days like dreams and fantasises when everyone is around, but once s/he is in need, then s/he will be all alone."
- 7 (1.2)
- 8 LUT : düşünce de elinden, kolundan tutanın bile yok ↓annem
fall hand arm grab even neg darling
"When you fall down (in need), there is no one to even grab your hand, arm (to help) darling."
- 9 (1.9)
- 10 LUT : iki kız1 bir oğlu var biri- (0.5) sorgunda,
2 daughters 1 son has one in sorgun
- 11 (0.8)
- 12 TEAM : °hmm°=
- 13 LUT : =oğlu ↑da .hh antalyada .hh telefon ediyo gelmiyolar

- son in Antalya phone come/neg.**
- "She has two daughters and one son. One of them is in Sorgun, her son is in Antalya. She phones and calls them, but they don't come.*
- 14 (3.9)
- 15 TEAH : *cık cık cık*
 "Tut tut tut."
- 16 (3.6)
- 17 TEAH : *işte ↑evlat .h evlat .h (.) °ne diyen°=*
 see child child what say
 "See, child child. (Children are always like that)
 What can we say."
- 18 LUT : *=eden bulur annem °eden bulur°*
 do get darling do get
 "When someone does sth bad, s/he will get the same darling.
 When someone does sth bad, s/he will get the same."

In line 1, TEAM initiates her turn with an expression of sympathy for FATO. Her initiative turn continues with TEAM's reference to her state in the past and comparison with her neediness today. Right after the end of her turn, LUT responds to her sympathetic evaluation with an agreement token prolonged to show the degree of mutual agreement between the two parties. Following LUT's emotional agreement token, someone passes by and there is a silence for 4.9 seconds. It is common for gossip sequences to have such long silences when a stranger passes by. After the discomfort of having a stranger around diminishes, LUT summarises the situation of being alone when in need with an idiomatic expression *hayalde gör düşte gör demiş*, *(.) ↑hele de bi düş de ↑gör* (*One has days like dreams and fantasises when everyone is around, but once s/he is in need, then s/he will be all alone.*) This idiom is responded with no uptake by the teachers for 1.2 seconds. LUT interprets this lack of uptake as an understanding problem, and repairs herself explaining what the idiomatic expression in her previous turn means. The teachers do not orient to this repair for 1.9 seconds either. Then, in line 10, LUT specifies the topic introducing FATO's kids to talk for the first time. Although there is a 0.8 second silence that looks like a TRP, it normally is thinking time within LUT's turn as her turn is not complete at the end of line 10, but is intoned to "signal more talk is forthcoming" *sorgunda*, (*in sorgun*) (Jenks, 2011: p.56-57) At this specific point in talk, one of the teachers, TEAM, responds for the first time with a silent minimal listenership token °hmmm°. As this minimal

response interrupts LUT's incomplete turn, she retakes right after it and completes it, through which she also initiates the gossip, *telefon ediyö gelmiyolar* (*She phones and calls them, but they don't come.*) The talk so far was about a general aspect of being alone when in need, but from this line on, it becomes evaluative specifically for FATO's kids. LUT's gossip initiation through introducing them as the topic is not responded by any of the teachers for 3.9 seconds. Following the silence, the second teacher, TEAH, takes the turn for the first time with an evaluative agreement token, *cık cık cık* (*tut tut tut*). The next 3.6 second silence is a relevant place for the first teacher, TEAM, to respond to the initiation, but she does not do so. Then, in line 17, TEAM retakes the turn and makes a comment about all children being neglectful, moving from FATO's children to all children in general. LUT ends this gossip repeating a proverb twice to give a moral lesson, in line 18.

5.4. Personality as the Topic of Gossip

Personality of people turn up as a gossipable topic often. The gossipable personality features include being arrogant, bad-tempered, illiterate, mean, cunning, jealous, dirty, and boastful and so on. People are very often criticised on one or more of these features by the gossipers. One common feature in most such kind of gossip is that, once the gossip about an absent party's character ends, the gossipers tend to compare themselves to the gossipee and show the strength of their personality in comparison to his/her negative aspects. (See Section 6.2.2)

The following extract samples a gossip sequence about one's personality, MUJ's in this case. Before this extract, the talk between LUT, MUN and an unknown third person is neutral, informative about the accident MUJ had. LUT gives information about the details of her broken bones, which is already known to others as they have been recorded talking about this accident more than once. The information LUT gives is followed by the listeners' get well wishes for MUJ. Then, LUT all of a sudden changes the direction of talk from neutral to evaluative.

Extract 25:

- 1 LUT : diyo ↑ya <↑benden burda akıllı kimse yok, (.) benden
say me here cleverer no one me
2 burda (.) ↑zengin kimse yok, (.) benden burda iyi
here richer no one me here better
3 yiye, iyi giye kimse yok, >=
eat better dress no one

- "As she says, 'Here no one is cleverer than me, no one is richer than me, no one eats better than me, no one dresses better than me.'"
- 4 ??? : =°hmm°
- 5 LUT : he (.) hepsini yiyo: hepsini- ↑gelen kızlara oyle
 yes everything eat everything visitor girls so
- 6 anlatıyo?
 tell
 "Yes. She eats everything, everything-. She tells so to the girls who visit."
- 7 (0.6)
- 8 MUN : hi.- boğaza ↑köpek aldanır=
 any- food dog fall for
 "Any- Only dogs fall for food." (She can't manipulate people's opinion about her with what she eats, only dogs can be deceived with food.)
- 9 LUT : =he
 "Yes."
- 10 (1.1)
- 11 LUT :benim gibi zengin yok, (.) benim gibi- g- güzel giyinen
 me as rich no one me as well dress
- 12 yok, benim gibi akıllı kimse yok, (0.3) o burda
 no one me as clever no one she here
- 13 ↑bi taneymiş
 unique
 "'There is no one as rich as me, there is no one as well dressed as me, there is no one as clever as me.' She says she is unique here."
- 14 MUN : herkes ettiğini bulur boşver
 "What goes around comes around. Never mind."

Following a totally neutral talk about MUJ's health condition, LUT from line 1, initiates gossip about MUJ's boastful and arrogant personality by reporting her (MUJ's) own sentences that reveal her character. She changes her speaking speed and enriches her talk with emphasized words and continuous intonation while she is reporting MUJ's original sentence in an imitating manner. Her turn is interrupted by a minimal listenership token by the faceless participant. LUT orients to this token as a clarification request and responds positively to that with turn initial position he (yes). Following the clarification, she refers to the visitors as the resource of information. As has been discussed earlier in this chapter within the gossip initiation section, reporting what a third party has said is a commonly used strategy to make oneself more trustworthy. LUT finishes her turn with a questioning tone making it a TRP for the listeners. MUN takes the turn next, in line 8, and orients to one part of LUT's orientation where she

mentions MUJ boasting about eating habits. MUN formulates her agreement turn in an idiomatic expression meaning food is worthless. LUT's next turn is a strong upgraded agreement following MUN's agreement with her initiation. Line 10 is a transition relevant place anyone can take, and LUT does take the turn after 1.1 second silence. She continues with her list of reporting what MUJ said to the visitors. MUN in the final ends the gossip with an emphasized proverb that means everyone will get the result of what they do, followed by a dismissal, *bosver* (never mind) .

5.5. Physical Acts as the Topic of Gossip

As has been explained in the introductory section of this part, these categories are not easily separable. For example, behaviour by definition has overlaps with the previously analysed character as one leads to another. However, what will be handled in this section is behaviour in its literal activity form. That is, the gossip sequences included in this part are instances like, the way someone walks, the way one dresses or makes her scarf, the way one controls her voice while talking etc. In most of these extracts, the gossipers try to infer the gossipees' character. The following extract does not have a pre-sequence. It starts right from line 1 of the gossip sequence. While one of the staff members is serving DON and FIT, one of the residents (MUN) walk by their sight and DON initiates the gossip with a question about MUN's behaviour

Extract 26:

- 1 DON : ↑köyde de mi ↑böyle gezermiş eli götünde °gı°?
village too Q like this walk hand hip gal
"Would she walk like this, hands on her hips, in her village too, gal?"
 (0.8)
- 2 STAFF : ki:m?
"Who?"
- 3 (1.0)
- 4 FIT : ↑serbes
"Free." (socially unaccepted and negative)
 (0.5)
- 6 DON : cık cık cık cık cık ↑hiç hayasızlar ki elleri
tut tut any shameless so hands
 7 götlerinde, (.) bellerinde (0.7) ↑erkek gibi
on hips waist man like
"Tut tut, they are so shameless. They walk their hands on their hips, waist, like men!"

(.)
(FIT and DON get one more turn each and explicitly agree with each other and the gossip ends there with MUN's arrival at the table.)

In this extract, DON changes the topic of conversation to MUN and her behaviour (the way she walks) by asking the question "*Would she walk like this, hands on her hips, in her village too, gal?*" in line 1. STAFF's direct question "*Who?*" about the subject person of DON's rhetorical question points to a lack of uptake by the hearer. Her clarification request is not responded by the initiator for a 1.0 sec pause, which is relatively long when the dynamics of conversations are considered. After this lengthy pause, her request is responded by a second listener, FIT, in line 4, who makes it explicit that she knows the person being evaluated. While acknowledging that she knows "*Who?*", she also gives her secondary evaluation by referring to the subject with an adjective rather than directly naming or pointing to her. The adjective she picks to refer to MUN, *Free*, is a highly positive remark on the face of it; however, it sometimes has a negative connotation in conservative Turkish context, where being free is undesirable for a woman. This should be noted here that, this analysis does not make an overgeneralisation over a whole country, society or culture. It only depends on analyst's personal experiences as a resident of the shared culture herself and her personal observations in the institution. After the response to the question, no one takes the floor for 0.5 secs and although there is no explicit display of understanding, this silence indicates first listener's uptake of the information provided by the second listener, FIT. The next line, where DON retakes the floor and starts the gossip about MUN more openly, proves that the question she asks in line 1 is not necessarily a question that seeks answer, but a rhetorical one pointing to MUN's specific behaviour and relating it to her village background to initiate the gossip she is about to make. While retaking the floor in line 6, DON uses a prolonged evaluation token *cık cık cık cık cık* (*tut tut tut tut tut*) which shows the level of disapproval depending on the number of repetitions of *cık*; and points to a relatively high one in this extract. Following her initial evaluative *cık cık* series, DON expands her evaluation commenting further on the way MUN walks and repairs herself changing from *hands on their hips* to *waist*, to seemingly choose a more polite word after repeating the same slang idiom twice. In the last part of line 7, *like men*, DON makes MUN's identity as a *woman* relevant in the talk as she

introduces MUN's way of walking as a man's action and unacceptable when performed by a woman. From this line on, she expands on her negative evaluation of her "manlike" behaviours, and a third listener, SAZ, repeats FIT's first point of MUN being "*free*". (This concept of *freedom* being a man's quality only points to a sexist approach in the society and is the topic of another discussion.)

5.6. Appearance as the Topic of Gossip

Physical appearance is a general topic of gossip and criticism in the data set as well as the previous five items. Contrary to the previous ones where the gossipee could be either known to all the speakers or only to the gossiper, in this type of gossip the gossipee is an absent third party known to both the gossiper and the listeners. So, it is generally one of the residents in the institution, not an outsider. Prior to the extract given in this section, SAZ, MUN and FIT are talking about MUJ's health and previous experiences in other institutions. The talk is generally about her character (See 5.4. for personality as the topic of gossip), how bad tempered she is and how much problems she had in the places where she stayed earlier. In this part of the extract, SAZ changes the topic from MUJ's personality to appearance. The listeners orient to her initiation and the topic of the next gossip becomes MUJ's weight.

Extract 27:

- 1 SAZ : ↑zayıfladım diyomuş (.) ↑zayıfladım ↓zayıfla-
lost weight say lost weight lost we-
- 2 [(ina)udible)
 "(I heard that) she says 'I lost weight, I lost weight, I lost.'"
- 3 MUN : [ki:m?]
 "Who?"
- 4 (.)
- 5 MUN : ↑müdür mü? (.) ↑şey mi? (.) zah ↓mı=
manager Q. that q ZAH Q
 "Is it the manager? Is it that one, ZAH?"
- 6 FIT : =↑yok gız
 "No gal."
- 7 (0.9)
- 8 FIT : senin ↑yanındaki
you next to
 "The one who lives next room to yours."
- 9 (1.0)
- 10 MUN : ↑aman g- ↑ne ↑zayıflaması gız get:
well what lose weight pal go

11 "Well, what weight loss, gal? (She didn't)"
(0.9)
12 SAZ : şişmanlamış, (.) kulakları [↑şeye dön:müş.]
put on weight ears thing look like
"She put on weight. Her ears look like the thing."
13 MUN : >[suratı şey:] gibi olmuş,
face thing like be
14 neresi zayıflamış?<
where lose weight
"Her face is like the thing. Where in her body did she lose
weight?"
15 (1.0)
16 MUN : °allallah°=
(Expression of negativity, disapproval.)
17 SAZ : =↑şey gibi sarkmış
thing like sag
"Her skin is sagging like the thing."
18 (2.6)
19 MUN : °↑naparsa yapsın. aman:° (.)°°kim geliyo?°°
what do who come
"She can do whatever she wants. Who is coming?"
20 SAZ : (inaudible)

In line 1, SAZ initiates the topic of gossip by bringing about what she heard from someone else about MUJ's statement about losing weight. In this line, she uses the strategy of reporting what someone else says as a gossip initiator (4.1.4.). She repeats the same expression, *I lost weight*, three times starting with a rising intonation emphasis combination \uparrow *zayıfladım*, continuing with rising intonation only \uparrow *zayıfladım* and lastly with falling intonation \downarrow *zayıfla-* in the same turn. The first response to the gossip initiation is made by MUN in overlap with SAZ's turn-final inaudible talk. She, in line 3, asks for a clarification about the identity of the gossipee [*ki:m?*] (*Who?*), which is a common SPP to gossip initiation (See 4.1.1.). SAZ as the gossip initiator is the expected next speaker but she does not orient to this clarification request by MUN. After a minimal silence where the clarification fails, MUN repeats her request by giving alternative specific name instead of asking a general question. (Spilton & Lee, 1977; Brinton et al, 1986) In her second attempt to request clarification for the identity of the gossipee, in line 5, MUN first nominates the manager \uparrow *müdür mü?* (*is it the manager?*), but repairs herself with a minimal pause followed by a hedging mark \uparrow *şey mi?* (*that one?*), and another minimal pause and then follows the repaired one, ZAH. In line 6, FIT, another listener, latches with her clarification request and responds negatively to the names proposed by MUN. After the response, there is a 0.9 second TRP where either SAZ or MUN

could take but do not. Then, in line 8, FIT retakes the turn and responds to MUN's clarification question in line 3, with a definition of the person instead of direct nomination. This SPP response is followed by a one second silence which is broken by MUN's uptake and then opposition as a response to the idea initiated by SAZ in line 1. So this line functions as a late SPP to FPP gossip initiation. Once MUN makes her agreement with SAZ on the gossip topic, SAZ takes the turn and puts forward her idea about what she mentions as someone else had reported to her. SAZ and MUN in line 10 to 17 show mutual agreement through adding up extra comment and echoing each other's phrases on the fact that MUJ did not lose weight, on the contrary, gained some weight. Although FIT makes it obvious that she knows what and whom the gossip is about, she does not orient to the conversation and shows no sign of agreement or disagreement. In line 19, MUN uses a pass by to end the gossip, °↑naparsa yapsın. aman: ° (*She can do whatever she wants.*) Then, she orients to the newcomer in the room. The fall in her voice and the explicit announcement of someone else's arrival makes it ambiguous if the gossip was already ended by the pass by or is it closed because of a stranger, which are both ways of gossip ending explained in the previous section on gossip endings. As has been already mentioned, sometimes there are no clear-cut boundaries between the categories even though they generally are distinct.

5.7. One Single Positive Gossip

Gossip by definition comprises talk about an absent person even if the talk is negative, positive, neutral, or informative. As has been discussed in the Literature Review chapter, this thesis only focuses on the evaluative talk about others, which is either negative or positive. The analysis of all the gossip sequences in this large data set show that the participants always initially evaluate people by their negative attributions. If there is a positive gossip, which is rare, it generally comes after a negative gossip about someone else, as a means of comparison between the two gossipees. This last section of the analysis chapter focuses on the one single positive gossip in gossip initial position. That is, this is the only example of a gossip sequence initiated by praising someone, instead of all the other critical initiations.

Prior to this extract, MUS and SAZ talk about SAZ's health problems and SAZ takes her pills. Then in line 2, MUS introduces the newly arrived resident in the place as the topic of conversation mentioning a positive aspect about her.

Extract 28:

- 1 SAZ : >↑şekerinen denk gidiyo bu gara soyka ↑tansiyon<
diabetes equal go this damn blood pressure
"This damn blood pressure concerts with diabetes. (They increase simultaneously.)"
- 2 (2.8)
- 3 MUS : ↑he: şu bizdeki avrat da öyleymiş, şekeri- yükseliyo
yes that us woman too same diabetes increase
4 ya °zavallının.°=
poor
"Yes. That woman at ours is the same too. Her diabetes increases, poor her."
- 5 SAZ : =°he: öyle°=
"Yes so."
- 6 MUS : =↑ama o da ↑kuran okuyo yav?
but she Quran read
"But she reads Quran." (Praise)
- 7 (0.9)
- 8 MUS : ↑çok temiz avrat °yav°
very clean woman
"She is a very innocent woman."
- 9 (1.3)
- 10 MUS : ↑bo:yuna allahtan konuşuyo heç:
always Allah talk never
"She always talks about Allah. Never-"
- 11 (3.0)
- 12 SAZ : >↑allah yardım etsin. °[cümle]mize gurban olduğum
Allah help all of us sacrifice*
- 13 MUS : [°he: °]
"Yes"
- 14 SAZ : allah yardım etsin.°
Allah help
"May Allah help all of us. Allah, whom I will sacrifice myself for, may help"*
- 15 (1.3)
- 16 MUS : gocasının da, (0.9) 1:: ↑beli neyi gırığımış o da: ,
husband too er:: back broken he too
17 (0.3) >nerde. tokatta mı nerde biyerde yatıyomuş.<
where tokat Q where somewhere stay
"Her husband's back is broken, and he is staying in somewhere, maybe Tokat or somewhere else."
- 18 (1.8)
- 19 MUS : ↑memurumuş gocası üç milyar aylık alıyomuş.
civil servant husband 3 billion salary earn
"Her husband is a civil servant and earns 3 billion liras monthly."
- 20 (0.9)

21 SAZ : eh ↑geçmiş olsun, allah iyiliklerini °versin°=
well hope they get well Allah health give
"Well, I hope they get well soon. May Allah give them health."

22 MUS : ↑avrat iyice çok iyice yav:: i- şiyen yatıyo. (0.4)
woman nice very nice that/with stay

23 ↑ays gariynan yatıyo.
AYS (N/T) stay
"That woman is nice, very nice. She stays with that, stays with AYS."

24 (2.5)

25 MUS :AYS GARI DİYO Kİ,
AYS say that
"AYS says that..."
 (*Some people say 'I will sacrifice myself for' before the name Allah, to show their respect.)

After taking her daily pills, SAZ complains about her health issues in line 1. Her complaint about herself is followed by a long silence of 2.8 seconds. Then, MUS introduces the new woman in the place as the topic of talk in line 3, where she compares her health to that of SAZ's. The lexical choice of the adjective in turn final position, °zavallının.° (*poor her*) is the first evaluative sign by MUS, where he shows his empathy for the woman. SAZ's agreement follows right after the end of MUS's turn in a low voice. Then, in line 6, MUS explicitly initiates the positive gossip about the woman praising her worship, ↑kuran okuyo (*she reads Quran*). The ↑ama (*but*), in turn initial position in Turkish, is a common use to emphasize something although it does not seem to have a lexical or functional meaning here in line 6. MUS' first attempt to initiate positive talk is not oriented by the listener, SAZ, for 0.9 seconds. Then, in line 8, MUS reattempts to initiate talk by explicitly describing the woman as a ↑çok temiz (*very innocent*) one. Following this secondary topic initiation, SAZ does not uptake for another 1.3 seconds. This no orientation is followed by MUS' third attempt to elaborate more on the woman's positive sides, *She always talks about Allah*, which is a highly desired habit for a Muslim community. This third attempt is followed by a longer silence of 3 seconds. After that long silence, SAZ takes the turn for the first time after the initiation of the positive gossip, and she makes a general comment of asking for help from Allah for everyone. Her insistence on not talking about the gossipee is interesting here because the gossipee is already nominated by MUS, so SAZ's response is expected to be about her, not all humanity. This signals SAZ's hesitance to agree with MUS. SAZ's general comment is followed

by a 1.8 second silence where none of the speakers talk, then MUS self-selects to talk. He gives extra information about the woman's husband and his health issues. Normally, in negative gossip extracts in the data set, giving extra information after a non-oriented gossip initiation elicits a response from the listener. However, in this positive one, the sequential organisation is different to the negative ones. There is no orientation still for 1.8 seconds. In line 19, MUS takes the turn again and gives more information emphasizing the job and the earning with his tone of voice. After another silence, SAZ, this time uptakes and orients to MUS' comments in a neutral way responding to his earlier turns (lines 3, 16 & 17) about their health, but does not orient to the later on extra information or the positive evaluative remarks about the woman. In line 22, MUS with a rising tone, takes the turn once again to emphasize that, *↑avrat iyice çok iyice yav::* (*That woman is nice, very nice.*) His turn in lines 22 and 23 are made up of two parts, first one is evaluative about the woman's niceness, second one is informative about who she stays with. However, SAZ does not orient to either of these, as is shown with a 2.5 second silence in line 24. As a result of this no uptake from SAZ, MUS retakes the turn and tells a story that woman's roommate AYS told about her niceness. For the rest of the extract, SAZ keeps non attentive to this positive gossip till the end. This positive gossip sequence is ended up by the initiation of a second (negative) gossip about another person. SAZ becomes attentive in that negative gossip in contrary to her behaviour in this positive one.

This chapter on the analysis of the content of gossip initially focused on the most common gossiped about topics which are gossip as an action, beliefs and morality, family and relations, personality, physical acts, and appearance, followed by a section on the only positive gossip incident in the data set.

5.8. Summary

This second analysis chapter on the content of gossip initially focused on the most common gossipes about topics which are gossip as an action, beliefs and morality, family and relations, personality, physical acts, and appearance, followed by a section on the only positive gossip incident in the data set.

Chapter 6. Discussion

6.0. Introduction

This study has investigated the gossip talk among the residents of an old people's home focusing on its structural and contextual sides adopting a Conversation Analysis perspective. In this chapter, the analysis of the findings in the previous chapter will be discussed in light of the previous research in the area. The discussion is structured in five main sections: the structural organisation of gossip, the contextual elements in gossip, the concepts of morality and religion in gossip, gossip in elderly interaction, and finally semi-institutional talk.

In the first section of this chapter, three levels of the structural organisation of gossip is going to be discussed to answer the first research question of this thesis which is 'How is gossip sequentially organised?' The first level of organisation is the initiation, where the gossipers bring the topic of gossip to the talk. This initiation is followed by the discussion of the response types found in the analysis. The last part on the discussion on organisation is the ending, where the sequence ending types detected in gossip talk are discussed. The section on the structural organisation is followed by the discussion on the content of gossip. Initially, the gossipable topics found in this research are compared and discussed with reference to the earlier studies. The next two sections, 6.2.2 and 6.2.3, will focus on the findings about the functions of gossip, followed by an insight into the teacher role. Finally, proverbs and their function and place in gossip is discussed. The third section goes one level deeper, and focuses on religion and morality in gossip. The last two sections discuss the findings relating them to the elderly interaction research in a broader sense, and then to the institutionality/non-institutionality of gossip talk under research in this thesis.

6.1. Discussion of the Sequential Organisation

The first section of the analysis in chapter 4 investigated the sequential organisation of the gossip with individual sections on the most common initiation, response and sequence ending types. Driven from these results, this first part of the discussion focuses on the common structural elements observed in gossip sequences. The following table demonstrates a summary of the results of the analysis of structural organisation of gossip.

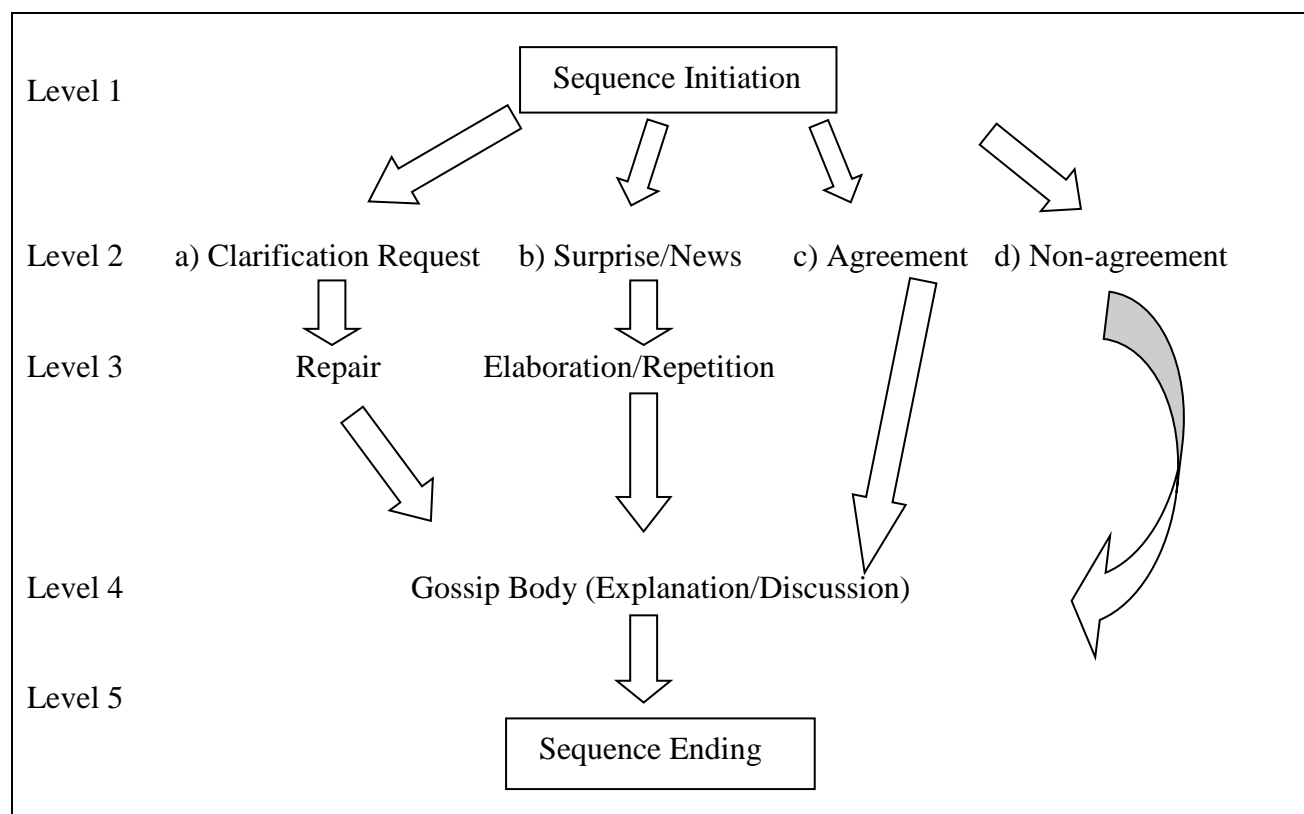


Table 2. Sequential Organisation of Gossip

As it is shown in Table 1, the micro analytic investigation of gossip sequences has indicated a five-level-structure to the organisation of talk. This thesis is interested in the first, second and the fifth levels of gossip sequences, because the limits of this thesis is not enough for a deep analysis of the gossip body. It will be the sole focus of a later micro-analytic research. In this section on the discussion of findings related to the structural organisation of gossip, the types of (1) gossipers' initiation, (2) hearer's response and (3) gossip ending will be summarised, and then will be discussed with reference to its relevance to the larger body of research on gossip. For this section, the main research of reference will be Bergmann's (1993) work on sequential organisation of gossip. Because, although there are other CA studies on gossip (i.e. Bergmann, 1998; Parker & O'Reilly, 2012), Bergmann's (1993) is the only known study (to my knowledge) that applies the same method of analysis, and focuses on the initiation, response and ending types separately. Parker & O'Reilly's (2012) approach to gossip sequences may seem similar to the one of this thesis because they focus on the attempts to "building alignment" (p.462) and "resisting alignment" (p.467); however, the way they define gossip is different in that they talked about

third party is present in conversations analysed for that study, and also the “therapeutic goals of family therapy shape and contextually frame the gossip” (p.459), contrary to the casual gossip talk in this study. Similarly, Bergmann (1998) does not specifically focus on the initiation, response and ending types in gossip sequences, but looks at the overall organisation of morality in discourse. Hence, the findings of this thesis will be discussed mainly with reference to Bergmann’s (1993) findings.

6.1.1. Gossip Initiation Types

The results of the analysis in Section 4.1. indicate that gossipers commonly prefer four ways to initiate a gossip talk. These ways are observed to be the most common strategies to initiate gossip. They are (1) *direct evaluation or news reveal*, where the gossip directly tells the gossip to the listeners without any pre-sequences to indicate the upcoming talk, (2) *humour, fooling, and/or sarcasm*, the examples of this type of gossip initiation point to a tendency to use it when the gossipee is a common topic of gossip who is not very sociable/friendly in the institution and is gossiped about more often than the others, (3) asking either referential or rhetorical *questions* about the gossipee to the hearer, and then building the gossip turn on the answer to these questions, and last but not least, (4) *reporting what a third party said* about the gossipee and making their arguments stronger by referring to a different source than themselves reports of what a third party said about the gossipee.

From the studies that look at the structural and sequential organisation of gossip, only Bergmann looks at the gossip initiation separately, and he defines the process as gossip “proposal” rather than initiation. Terming the phenomenon this way, his study has quite few similarities together with differences to the findings of this current study where I termed the same phenomenon as ‘initiation’. Stories, rhetorical questions, and reports of what another party said about the gossipee are the shared types of gossip initiation in both studies. However, there are differences in initiation types as well. For example, the most common type in this current study, direct evaluation or news reveal, is not observed in Bergmann’s (1993) study; on contrary, his point is:

“Anyone who, “out of the blue”, that is, without any forewarning, tells a joke will, if he succeeds, evoke irritation if not anger in his partners regardless of his remarkable behaviour. Conversations will be successful only if the participants repeatedly indicate, communicate, confirm, and ratify to each other what they are at present concerned with and what they intend to do next... Such situation occurs when the interactors try to transpose a conversation that has not yet become gossip or to end gossip conversation that is already in progress” (p.80).

As can be indicated from this explanation, he points to the concern about the reaction of the hearer upon an out-of-the-blue gossip initiation. However, the results of this current thesis show that the hearers are 'comfortable' with direct initiation without any pre-sequences or pre-work offered by the gossipier. He also suggests a hesitation from the side of the gossip initiator, and explains that the initiator does a lot of face work, and uses various techniques to avoid rejection. The sequential placing of this hesitation shows a difference in this current study, as the gossip initiator initially does not seem to show any hesitation because of the fear from getting a 'disagreement' response, but uses this technique 'after' s/he gets a dispreferred response. Another sequential organisational difference between the results of these two studies is that Bergmann (ibid: p.82) suggests that "establishing the subject of gossip" precedes the actual gossip turn, while in this research, the hearers are initially expected to understand the subject, and an establishment on the gossip subject is made only if it is requested by the hearer. (See Section 4.2.1. on Clarification Requests).

In sum, this study supports some of Bergmann's points on gossip initiation/proposal in casual talk, but builds on him by showing opposite evidence for two of his findings which are direct initiation is not desirable, and pre-work on the establishment of the subject of gossip is required. His overall findings suggest that people are more hesitant to initiate gossip and do need more pre-work before they make sure that preferred response is likely, and mutual understanding of the subject of gossip is established, while the findings of this current study show less pre-work on the establishment of gossip subject, and more directness in terms of gossip revealing. When the differences between the findings of these two studies are considered in relation to the interactional understanding of gossip, this current study shows that the need for pre-work diminishes depending on the close relationships between the members of the gossip circle, which indicates that the structural organisation of gossip is shaped by the level of closeness between the gossip initiator and the gossip hearer(s). Therefore, group dynamics play a crucial role on the structural organisation of gossip talk. These differences between the two studies also show that the sequential organisation of gossip in institutional settings is different from non-institutional ones, as the results of this thesis show that it can be affected by the gossip hearers' hierarchical institutional roles.

6.1.2. Listener Response to Initiation

The analysis of listener responses to gossip initiation which is presented in detail in Section 4.2 shows that the answers from the hearer are limited to four main categories. The first one of these responses is classified as clarification requests where there is a hearing and/or understanding problem pointed out by the hearer verbally or non-verbally. These clarification requests are treated as repair initiation by the gossip and s/he repairs herself till it is explicitly shown by the hearer that the gossip understands the topic. Once this mutual understanding is accomplished, then comes an agreement or lack of agreement from the hearer. The second interactional act a gossip hearer does is showing surprise as a reaction to the newly introduced gossip, which signals that the information is new to the hearer. Accordingly, the hearer in such cases generally shows interest in the gossip and is observed to encourage the gossip to elaborate more on the gossip topic before s/he shows their positioning toward the gossip. After initiator's response to these two types of reactions, the following sequence comes either in the third and fourth response types: agreement (evaluation, upgraded/second assessment, forms of yes, laughter, and echo) or lack of agreement (long silence/no orientation, explanation of a situation/institutional rule, disagreement with an extra (positive) point about gossipee, dis/non-agreement with religious or moral reference, and 'don't gossip!' as a disagreement marker).

These are called *lack of agreement* rather than simply *disagreement* because, although some of them may be an indication of disagreement, they do not always show disagreement, on the contrary, some hearers who later on agree tend to hide their agreement initially, and use one of these forms to cover their face from directly agreeing with a socially unacceptable behaviour, i.e. gossip. Once the initiation is met with an agreement or lack of agreement, all the parties in talk become gossipers if the response to initiation does not act a sequence ender.

It has already been explained that the closest research to this current one in terms of methodology and focus (on separate sequential levels) is Bergmann (1993), and his findings on response to initiation is limited to approval and rejection" but does not explain in which forms these are accomplished in talk. So, the results of this study summarised above builds on to the existent literature going deeper into the micro-details of the 2nd level of gossip sequence.

On the issue of responding to gossip initiation, Degnen (2006) suggests that sometimes everyone orients to gossip, "then (it) becomes public property for the gossip circuit, passed by word of mouth from group to group, circulating through individuals, sometimes becoming part of the

accepted community code about a particular person, and at other times not making a lasting impression.” (p.76). Therefore, gossip is an important and undeniable part of everyday talks of the elderly, as is the case in this current thesis.

One interesting finding in this research is the response times. The analysis shows that contrary to the common belief in literature, wait time before reacting to gossip initiation does not necessarily indicate a coming dispreferred response. On the contrary, it can sometimes be result of the face-threatening nature of gossip. Because of the fact that gossip does not have a positive image in the society, it can be considered acceptable for the hearer to take his/her time before agreeing with it. Therefore, long silences can be followed by either agreement, or lack of agreement. The accepted wait time rules of CA in casual talk does not work in such sensitive topics (e.g. gossip) where one seems to need time to decide if it is safe to participate in talk. Bergmann (1993) explains the same issue with gossip’s immoral nature, which the findings of this research would agree with (p.85). It can also be because the hearer does not want to show a quick reaction to gossip initiation to avoid looking too eager to gossip, which could make the others in talk think that s/he is a gossipier.

One of the agreement types identified in this study is upgraded/second assessment, and it fits with Hayano’s (2011) “a speaker who is agreeing with a prior assessment often preffers an upgraded evaluation” (p.58). Another point observed in this research that is parallel to previous literature is the language used in the gossip body that follows the agreement. It generally has no respect and is coarse in nature. For example, in the gossip body following Extract 20, which is omitted from as the gossip body is not focused in this thesis, LUT shows her agreement with KAD’s negative evaluative comments about a woman’s way of dressing, by comparing the gossipee with a prostitute. This kind of coarse upgraded evaluation is quite common in this data set. Actually, it is not included in this thesis, nor in previous research to my knowledge, but it would be an interesting and promising topic for future research.

In sum, all of these findings brought together show that the usual wait time-preference/dispreference relation in talk is not applicable in gossip sequences because of the face threatening nature of gossip talk. The results of this study, when compared to the eixistent CA literature, indicate that the silences can function in different ways in different types of talk depending on the face-related nature of the genre, as in gossip in this case. This study, in more general terms, contributes to the interactional understanding of gossip by showing that the

hearer's response to gossip initiation shapes the rest of the gossip sequence, either encouraging elaboration by agreement, or initiating a conflict sequence by disagreement, or ending gossip sequence by no uptake of initiation.

6.1.3. Gossip Ending Types

The third focus of interest in this thesis on the structural organisation of gossip is on the 5th level of gossip sequence which is gossip ending. Section 4.3. in the analysis chapter covers examples of five most commonly observed forms of gossip ending types in the large data set analysed at micro level for this thesis. The gossip ending that is observed the most often is adding up a second gossip either about the same topic but a different person, or the same person on a different topic. The next gossip ender is the arrival of an outsider in the gossip area. The mentioned outsider does not necessarily need to be the gossipee him/herself, but anyone such as a staff member, the researcher, or another resident who the gossipers do not want to incorporate into their talk. This observation might be again related to the fact that gossip is a face threatening issue that needs to be done secretly as it is not morally accepted. (The concept of morality and gossip is discussed in more detail in Section 6.3). In some of the gossip sequences, once the news is delivered, the responses are elicited, and sometimes even the gossip itself is developed and continued for a while, either the gossipers or the gossip hearer (who, after level 3 turn to a gossipers as well) can use a dismissal phrase whose meaning is similar to *whatever* to end the gossip sequence. In the most interesting - interesting because it is hard to explain why this might happen - form of gossip ending, the gossipers end the sequence with no indication of ending. All parties stop talking all of a sudden, there is a silence following this unsignalled ending, then the parties either leave the place, or start talking about something else. This might be because of the arrival of a person who should not hear the gossip, but normally the speakers vocally orient to such gossip cutters. So whatever I claim will stay bold because of the data's audio only nature. The last way of gossip ending takes the form of proverbs to give a summary of the lesson to be taken from the gossip. It is not necessarily the gossip initiator who gives this lesson, but generally is one of the residents who show an effort to dictate their *knowledgeable* position in the group. These lessons in proverb form are generally followed by a second proverb from another party in talk for example in Extract 22. (See Section 6.2.5. for further information on gossip-proverb-lesson relation).

These findings have commonalities with some of the earlier research on gossip sequence. For example the second most common form of gossip ending which is the arrival of an outsider in the gossip area was also observed in Bergamann's (1993) study. The outsider in both studies is the researcher. It is interesting that, the participants engage in gossip while the recording is in progress, but suddenly end it when the researcher enters the scene. This also can be interpreted as a justification of the data collection method, because this act proves that the participants overcame the Observer's Paradox, maybe due to the recordings being audio only with small voice recorders instead of video cameras directed to them.

Degnen's (2006) point mentioned above about the orientation of the hearers where he points to the whole group orientation making gossip the main topic of talk while "at other times not making a lasting impression" (p.76) is relevant in gossip ending as well. So, no orientation from the participants leads to an unavoidable ending in whatever context the initiation is proposed.

Another form of gossip ender that can be related to existing findings in literature is the use of *I don't know* as a dismissal response to gossip initiation together with the others such as *whatever*, *I don't care*, *who knows* etc. On this, Mondada (2011) wrote:

"Claiming not to know is a practice that addresses both epistemic and moral issues. Saying I don't know is a way by which a participant who is expected to know both disclaims his knowledge and refuses the terms of what he should know, thus not only disaligning with the previous speaker and his version of the world, but more radically casting suspicion on his knowledge and legitimacy. This epistemic and moral stance blocks the progressivity of talk and action." (p.56)

Deriving from Mondada's point, we can relate these dismissals to the immorality of gossip, where the hearers indirectly avoid participation in gossip talk. Apart from this moral side of the issue, another reason for the use of claim of insufficient knowledge in the form of dismissal in gossip talk could be the relationship between the gossipper and the gossip hearer. When the gossip hearer is not close friends with the gossipper, they may avoid agreement for the fear of being reported back to the gossipee. Similarly, when the gossipee is a close friend of the gossip hearer, the hearer tends to disclaim his/her knowledge even if the earlier/later recordings show that s/he knows the gossip. So, dismissals are generally the forms used when the hearer tries to take the safe grounds upon hearing gossip about either a close friend, or from a not-so-close friend.

The most problematic issue with the gossip endings is the type that has no clear evidence of ending, but gets cut off. There are many possible explanations for this type of ending which is not reported by earlier studies either. The most likely reason would be the arrival of an outsider such as the gossipee him/herself, or another person who is not a desirable gossip audience. In this case, the gossipers cut the gossip sequence without a proper ending as in the other ending types. Another reason could be any distracter that gets the attention of the speakers. For example, when there is a new comer to the institution, or an announcement from the managerial staff, the ongoing talk between the residents gets cut off, and everyone orients to that side. Although it is not easy to offer a certain explanation for this, it can still be concluded that gossip talk differs from other forms of talk in that it is easily affected by outside affects factors because of its face threatening nature for the gossipers and the listener. In short, the 5th level of the gossip sequence does not always follow the set rules of talk due to the sensitivity of its content.

This study investigated the ending type as one single item in talk, and contributed to the research on gossip ending types by showing examples to the most common forms of ending, but the results of the micro level analysis show that ending can be studied as a separate research topic. Because in most gossip sequences, ending is not a single turn; but a multi-turn sequence in itself. The word count limitations of this study allowed only to the listing of the types of ending as a whole rather than the sequential organisation of these types in themselves.

6.2. Discussion of the Content of Gossip

In the second part of the analysis chapter, the analysis focus on the content of gossip to answer the last two research questions on the topics and content of gossip. Together with topics of gossip, this section also discusses the extra points that arose in the analysis of the content of findings such as self and/or other appraisal through gossiping about an absent third party, gossip's function as a socially connecting/disconnecting tool, the teachers and the state of their role as a teacher in gossip participation, and finally, the use of proverbs in different positions in gossip, either body or ending.

6.2.1. Gossip Topics

The second part of the analysis chapter of this thesis focuses on the content of gossip, while looking at the gossipable topics in this context. The results of the analysis of 92 gossip extracts distilled from the whole corpus point to six common gossip topics. One of them is the act of gossip itself, where the participants gossip about someone's gossiping behaviour. They show explicit signs of negative evaluation if someone is known to gossip a lot, and they do this through gossip. This finding is of crucial importance because it also justifies the methodology chosen for this study. The studies in literature generally focused on people's ideas about gossip, but this study shows that the "ideal" in their minds do not always fit with the "actual" behaviour. Beliefs and morality are also another common topic in gossip sequences either as a form of evaluating one's religious/moral stance directly as in Extract 23 where MUS and AYS are evaluating MUN's religious strength through her action and say it explicitly; or, in some other examples, the same is achieved implicitly without direct mentioning of religious or moral norms, but implying them. Family and relations are another common topic of gossip among the residents of this old people's home, and the best explanation for the gossip about close relations can be that these people have been living together for a long time, and share a lot in terms of information about other people's friendships, family relations and so on. The next most commonly gossiped about topic is absent parties' personality. Examples to the gossipable personal qualities include if people are mean or generous, friendly or bad tempered, talkative or silent and the like. Extract 25 is an example to personal traits gossiped about and the participants talk about MUJ's arrogance. The participants in this study are also observed to gossip about each other's acts such as walking, talking, laughing etc. they mention certain norms attributed to certain ways of such behaviours and judge others on these attributions. Sometimes these meanings loaded to behaviours are observed to be based on social norms, some are based on the gossiper's own understanding. The reaction from the listeners shows us if it is considered as a culturally shared norm, or only personal. The last gossip topic frequently observed in this data set is the physical appearance of the residents in the place. A gossipee's weight, beauty, dressing can become a gossipable topic in gossip talk.

In sum, the micro analysis of authentic gossip talk among the elderly brings about the gossipable topics listed as *gossip*, *beliefs and morality*, *family and relations*, *personality*, *physical acts*, and *appearance*. The selection of topics can be read as a signal of the social texture of the context.

When compared with the results of previous studies on gossip in different contexts with varied cultural backgrounds, the topics show a significant difference although they have some similarities with this current study. The findings of this current study agrees with Fine and Rosnow's (1978) finding about personal qualities or behaviour as the topic of gossip. Personal affairs of absent parties as a gossip topic added by later studies (Gottman & Mettetal, 1986; Eder & Enke, 1991; Parker et al, 1994) is also observed in this study as in Extract 14, where people talk about ARI's affairs with the male residents in the institution. While Emler (1990) found that participants tend to gossip more about people whose names are said openly, Bergmann's (1993) study conflicts with this and claims that people avoid mentioning gossipee's name explicitly. The findings of this current study agree with the former one; most of the gossip subjects are expressed openly, and whenever there is an unclarity from at least one of the hearers, the clarification is supplied upon request.

Personal appearance is one of the shared topics in both Levin and Arluke's (1985) and Litman and Pezzo's (2005) studies, and in this one despite the differences between the age groups and contexts where the data of the three are gathered. This means that appearance, especially amongst women, keeps being an important aspect independent of the differences in most aspects of life. On the other hand, the same study by Levin and Arluke finds "dating and sex" as the next most common topic of gossip, which is not observed in this study. The initial thought on this difference was that it could be because of the age of the participants, because Levin and Arluke studied younger people while this study aims at a relatively older age group. However, when the same findings are compared with Saunder's (1999) findings where he lists gossip topics of elderly participants as "fashion, dating, sex, and problems of living", it is obvious that the findings are totally different from this current study while it shares "dating and sex" with the previous one. This similarity between the two contradicting the current findings can be speculated to be culture specific rather than age related. Because, from the ethnographic knowledge of the researcher based on experience of being from that region (see Section 3.1.7. on Researcher's Insider Role), and having had an opportunity to spend two months with the participants, it can be easily claimed that neither the culture lets the people (especially the elderly) to date and have sex out of marriage, nor do the participants themselves are in favour of the idea. It is even obvious in Extract 14 where they evaluate someone on *looking at man*, no wonder about dating or sex.

In sum, the findings of this study when compared to the earlier studies in different contexts and various age groups, show that although there are some globally gossipable topics such as *family, problems of living, appearance, personal qualities, and behaviours*, some of the gossip topics are age specific in different cultures as in the case of absence of *dating and sex* in this Turkish elderly talk study. A conversation analytic study on gossip behaviours of a different age group could give totally different results to this current one because of the difference between expectations from the elderly and the younger people. Similarly, no previous study has reported *religion* as a commonly gossiped about topic while it is one of the core ones in this current study. This difference indicates that the topics of gossip talk can not be considered outside of the cultural context it emerges in.

6.2.2. Gossip as an Element of (Self/Other) Appraisal

A common phenomena the results of this research has shown is the function of gossip to praise one's own self or another person through the gossip of an absent third party. Many of the extracts have examples to this praising function of gossip. For example in Extract 19 (see Section 4.3.3.):

- 14 SAZ : şuraya bugünn aha iki ↑üç çeşit yemek geldi. allah
 here today two three different dish come god
 15 var. (0.4) ↑daha fazla (0.9) bi tek çorba yedim
 know more only soup have
 "God knows, two three different dishes came here today,
 even more. I only had soup."

Following a gossip sequence about MUJ's eating habits, which is mainly focused around the idea that she eats too much, SAZ in the above given lines compares her eating habits with hers and praises herself in terms of the same normatively wrong behaviour of 'eating too much'.

This finding shows how gossip is used as a technique to praise oneself for gaining a favourable reputation in the social context. Earlier studies point to the same issue of self-appraisal through talking about a negative aspect of an absent third party (Suls, 1977; Bergmann, 1993; Wert & Salovey, 2004).

Scholars argue that gossip is the tool for expressing oneself for the gossipier, and s/he understand their own qualities through comparing themselves with the others (Fine & Rosnow 1978, Fine 1986), for which gossip seems to be the most appropriate tool, if not the only one.

All of these findings are supported in this study even after many years conducted in a totally different social context, and what this study adds to it is the fact that active participants in gossip use this same strategy to praise another absent third party as well as the self. More interestingly, these incidences of gossiping about an absent third party, to praise a second absent third party are the main sources of positive gossip talk in this data set. Apart from one single case that directly starts from a positive gossip about the new resident in the place (and it should be noted here that it is not oriented by the hearer) (see Section 5.7), all the examples of positive evaluative talk follow an earlier negative gossip; both to point to the level of disapproval for the gossipee, and to show how favourable the other alternative is.

In sum, although gossip is generally defined as an undesirable form of talk, this function of praising the self shows that gossip also has potential benefits for the gossipers, especially in terms of social status and relations. This finding also shows that gossiping about another party to highlight one's own positive sides is a commonly used communicative strategy by the gossipers to become accepted in the group they belong to. Furthermore, members of the group who try to take the role of a leader in the institution tend to use this strategy more to gain popularity and respect.

6.2.3. Gossip as a Social (Dis) Connection Tool

Together with the above discussed function of praising, another important feature of gossip observed in this data set is its function as a social connector/disconnector among the participants in the study. The close analysis of the gossip extracts combined with the researcher's ethnographic knowledge of the institution and the relations there, show that some of the residents (especially MUJ) are more likely to be the subject of gossip; and the gossip hearers, even if they do not necessarily agree with the gossip, do hesitate to show their disagreement and are even observed to 'pretend to' agree with them. A clear example to this is some of the extracts where MUJ is the topic of gossip. During the initial recordings, MUN sometimes shows her disagreement to gossip about MUJ, but gets harsh oppositions from the initiator or the other hearers. After that, she realises that gossip about MUJ is a combining tool in that institution, and people who agree around that have a close relationship. So, if she wants to get into that group of friends, she needs to at least *not disagree* with gossip about MUJ. The same is valid for DON, who once strongly opposed to a group of gossipers about MUJ and ended up *blamed* of being

MUJ's *close friend*. After that, in the gossip sequences, even if they are not included in the analysis chapter of this thesis, DON does not directly oppose to a gossip initiation about MUJ. She either shows agreement by using one of the strategies discussed in Section 6.1.2, or does not orient to talk at all.

These findings indicate that human beings, as social organisms, need to form circles of *friendship*, and gossip is one of the tools used for this purpose as was also expressed by Foster (2004). Apart from establishing friendships, gossip also helps maintaining close friendships through the sharing of private information about others (Blumberg, 1972). Similarly, Baumeister et al (2004) explain the social role of gossip as not only a negative evaluative thing, but it also plays a crucial role in keeping an active interactional environment by the help of shared ideas and sense of community. Apart from this sense of community between the gossip circle, Scott's (1995: p.142) and Capp's (2010) reference to gossip's "aggression" component towards someone from a higher status, or wealthy background can explain the case for the one resident (MUJ) who is left out of this circle, as well as causing her supporters to be left out. They state that when someone is better than the other in any form, the rest of the group is more likely to gossip about him/her out of the anger aggress. This concept of aggression can well be used to explain the shared dislike toward MUJ who comes from a wealthy background and boasts about her superiority quite often.

The findings of this thesis agree with the existent literature on the importance of gossip's function on friendship, bringing along a more detailed explanations to the two facets of the case. On the one hand it connects people to form friendly circles through gossiping about shared dislikes, and on the other, it disconnects people from group if they happen to disagree with an initiated gossip, especially about those shared dislikes. In order to preserve their "positive social value they claim for themselves" (p.5) (i.e. face) as Goffman (1967) puts it, gossip hearers either align with or reject alignment with the gossip. The findings show that the risk of being disconnected from the circle makes the gossip hearers avoid disagreement, and change that reaction either to agreement, or neutrality/silence. This shows the power of gossip in relationships, especially in such closely knit groups who have to live together in all aspects of their lives including, eating, sleeping, socialising, and many more.

6.2.4. The Evaporation of Teacher Role

This part about teacher role and its evaporation in gossip sequences is an extra point that arose in the data, which is worth discussing here. During the data collection period in the institute, there were two teachers placed there to have semi-formal knitting classes with the female residents of the home who are described in the Methodology Chapter in detail. As these two teachers were supposed to have classes every afternoon from 1 pm to 5 pm, half of the data was collected from their classes. As a result, these teachers ended up being active participants in gossip talk. From the 28 extracts micro-analysed in this thesis, 9 of them (Extracts 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 16, 17, 21, and 24) have at least one of these teachers as initiators, responders, or enders. For example in Extract 24, TEAM initiates the gossip by asking a referential question to LUT about FATO, “*Who knows how she was in old times, when she was young.*” In the same extract, the other teacher, TEAH is a gossip hearer after LUT’s expansion on the gossip topic, which is FATO’s children, and makes a negative evaluative generalisation about all children by saying:

17 TEAH :ište ↑evlat .h evlat .h (.) °ne diyceñ°=
 see child child what say
 “*See, child child. (Children are always like that)*
 What can we say.”

So, it can be concluded from this example and the others analysed in the relevant sections that teachers can act as active participants of gossip. One important point to be mentioned here is the difference between the expected teacher roles compared to these teachers’ role in this context. The analysis of the extracts where the teachers take part shows that the teacher role does not work the same way as it would do in a formal education context where the teachers have a “superior role” indicated by their explicit verbal and/or non-verbal behaviours. As far as the in depth review of literature shows, no research has been found to study the teacher’s role in gossip in classrooms. The results of the analysis of this study show that there is no relation between the teacher role and the gossip participation. On the contrary, the teachers being the *outsiders*, because they started working in the institution exactly the same week this research started, a role shift in terms of knowledgeability is easily observed in gossip talk. There are two possible explanations to this driven from the data. One is, the gossip community in the institution is

already a social circle where everyone knows each other, so the gossip topics and the gossipee are known to all of the participants but for the teachers. So, in most of the extracts, if the gossip is about someone who is not in the institution (e.g. a family member of an absent third party, or a past event in the institution which all the residents know about), the residents start doing being the knowledgeable on the issue, and pass this information to the teachers either upon request, or without any elicitation from them. The second explanation to the evaporation of the expected teacher role, is that the residents in the place being the *experienced* ones in life, they easily take up the role of an expertise and give life lessons to the teachers during or following a gossip sequence. As in the same extract:

18 LUT : =eden bulur annem °eden bulur°
 do get darling do get
 "When someone does sth bad, s/he will get the same darling.
 When someone does sth bad, s/he will get the same."

The findings of this study about the teachers' active participation and role in gossip talk together with the other participants' orientation to their presence contradict with Hannerz's (1967) idea that "gossip, as a boundary-maintaining mechanism, can serve to keep outsiders from participating efficiently in a network if the content of the gossip is exclusive." (p.44). Another role teachers have in gossip talk in this data set is to be the subject of gossip. That is, in some of the extracts, such as Extract 12 in Section 4.2.4.1., the residents in the place gossip about the teachers in their absence. This can be explained through Bergmann's (1993) theory of outsider being more likely to be the subject of gossip. What Bergmann discusses is that the participants tend to gossip about the outsiders such as the researchers because they are not well known and easy to be speculated about; similar to the case with the very close ones, about whom there is a lot to talk about (Bott, 1957: p.59). The same is valid in this data set as well, because there are quite a lot of gossip sequences where the subject is the researcher herself. So, the concept of being the outsider can possibly explain the reason why the teachers are subject to gossip as well as being participants. Another possible explanation for the active participation of the teachers in gossip talk might be their attempts to building alignment with the rest of the group, and becoming a member of it.

From the analysis of the extracts where the two teachers are present as gossipers leaving aside their identities as teachers, it can be concluded that identity (teacher identity in this case) is a fluid concept. Identity, in its most general sense answers the question of “who we are to one another” in talk (Drew, 2005: p.74), and it is “seen not as merely represented in discourse, but rather as performed, enacted and embodied through a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic means.” (De Fina et al, 2006: p.3). Similarly in this context, the identities of the participants (i.e. teachers here) are embodied through their actions and words. Sacks’ (1992) initial description of identity change highlights that it doesn't need to be changing from the identity one had at the beginning to another identity that s/he didn't have at beginning; but it's a changing of operative identities, where the identities they end up with are identities they already had, but that they were not using earlier on. In post modern studies, identity is generally described as “a fluid, dynamic and shifting process” through the analysis of talk (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006: p.35). In the data set used for this thesis, the concept of fluid identity is relevant for people with institutional identities such as the staff members where they become part of gossip as has been described in earlier sections, and the teachers’ institutional identity is fluid as in the above discussed issues. The teachers move in and out of their institutional (i.e. teacher) and social (i.e. gossip) identities (Gonzales, 2016). When we bring this discussion to the narrower focus of this study, the fluidity of the identities of the participants in gossip talk indicate that gossip is an inclusive activity that shares characteristics with other forms of talk.

It can certainly be concluded from the results of this study together with the existent literature that this specific issue of teacher role in gossip talk needs further investigation in various contexts such as schools, private courses, or any other context where there is a teacher as a professional. Such studies can give deeper insights than the limits of this study has permitted.

6.2.5. Proverbs and Their Functions in Gossip

Proverbs have been identified as one of the most commonly used linguistic elements in gossip endings as has been described in Sections 4.3.5. and 6.1.3. Apart from acting as a gossip ender, they are also common in gossip body which is not investigated in detail for this study as it is not in the scope of the focus of this research. Whatever the positioning is, the results of the analysis show that either the gossip, or the gossip hearers who become gossipers later on frequently use

proverbs that either summarise the gossip topic, or give a moral lesson to the whole gossip circle. Out of the total 92 gossip sequences recorded and analysed for this study, 11 of them end with one or two subsequent proverbs. For example in Extract 21 from Section 4.3.5:

- 3 SAZ :↑onları söylet on-↑bunu AS::, (0.5) bunu söylet onu AS:
 they speak th- this HANG:: (0.5) this speak them HANG:
 "Make them speak, punish her. Make her speak, punish
 them." (Proverb: No one takes on the blame. Everyone blames
 each other)
 4 (0.6)
 →5 LUT :↑suç altın kürk olsa (.) kimse üstüne dakma:z.
 blame golden fur coat be/if(.) no one on put
 "Even if a blame is a golden fur coat, no one will put it
 on." (Proverb: no one takes the blame on, everyone blames
 each other whatever the problem is.)

Two of the participants in the talk, SAZ and LUT, subsequently say two different proverbs that do the same action i.e. summarise the situation between FAT and her family. This kind of two-pair proverb use is quite common in this data set, which shows the mutual agreement on the issue. It can be connected to the second-story concept in Conversation Analysis where the function of the second story is to complement/agree/support the previous one. This similarity between two different genres points to the systemacity of language when looked at with closer lenses despite the messiness recognised at first look.

Apart from being summative, proverbs do also act as forms of delivering, stating and reaffirming moral messages or life lessons, which is also stated as one of the function of gossip by Bott (1957). For example in Extract 24:

- 14 MUN : herkes ettigini bulur bosver
 "What goes around comes around. Never mind."

MUN ends the gossip about MUJ's arrogance by giving the gossip, LUT, a life lesson about the nature's rule of punishing/rewarding people over what they do. On this issue, Silverman (1998), similarly claims that proverbs end a sequence because of a lack of agreement (p. 8), as is apparently happening in this example. This type of examples can be attributed to the person's

willingness to pass a social or cultural norm to the other parties in talk. Previous studies on proverbs have shown that they are a commonly used form of delivering messages about society, and the findings of this detailed research on gossip offers a similar function to gossip, agreeing with the existent literature on the establishment and maintaining of moral norms (Nikander, 2000; Lipscomb, 2011). The similarities in the findings can be explained through the general content of gossip and proverbs being morality and norms based. The next section is about the existence of the concepts of morality and religion in gossip talk.

6.3. Concepts of *Religion* and *Morality* in Gossip

Having discussed the findings related to the research questions about the structural organisation of gossip and the gossip content on the previous two sections, this section seeks answers to the third research question that focuses on the common contextual features of gossip talk. On this respect, the findings indicate that the broader context (i.e. society) gossip takes place affects the content of gossip by adding a high percent of religious elements to talk. This study aims to elaborate more into the content of gossip in terms of religion and morality that are present in gossip talk in an interchangeable manner. What is meant by *interchangeability* will be clearer by the end of this section. The previous literature on gossip mainly focused on the moral aspect of the behaviour by describing it as a tool for establishing moral norms in the society, as well as being an *immoral* act itself as described in the second chapter of this thesis. The results of this study add the concept of *religion* into this discussion, and indicate that gossip functions as a tool for establishing religious norms more than moral ones explained by earlier studies. To elaborate on this finding, the first part of this section focuses on religion's power on ending gossip where one of the participants in interaction explicitly tell the others to stop gossiping as it is a *sin*. The second part discusses the gossiper's intention to evaluate the gossipee's religious beliefs on the grounds of her behaviours. The last part compares the participants' ideas about gossip versus their actual active gossip behaviours.

6.3.1. Religion as a *Force* to Stop Gossip

The results of the analysis of gossip talk in our data set show that religion is present in the gossip in various forms. In some extracts, the participants refer to religion to disagree with the gossip, while in others they use the place of gossip in religion (*sin*) to end the gossip talk. This religious

reference can follow a prior disagreement by another gossip hearer as in the case in Extract 15, or can be in the initial disagreement turn.

- 7 DON :↑allah korkusu yok, kulu korkusu yok. (0.4) ↑büyük yok,
allah fear neg. man fear neg. senior neg.
8 küçük yok
junior neg.
*"There is no fear either from God or from humanbeings.
There is no respect for seniors."*
9 (2.4)
10 DON : (inaudible) ↑iftira söylüyo, ↑yalan söylüyo, (0.5) ↑goo
calumniate lie gossip
11 gaybet?
detract
*"They (people in general) calumniate, lie, gossip,
detract."*

In this example, and many more of the same kind, the gossip is judged on her lack of “the fear of God”, indicating that God should be a stopping force to keep one away from gossiping.

Another common example to religion as a means to stop gossip is by the gossiper's rejection to agree or join to the gossip basing this decision on the belief that the act of gossip is not allowed by religion. In either of these cases, taking the religious rules prior to the moral values is an important issue that gives insights about the build up of the society.

The research body on gossip summarised in the Literature Review Chapter of this thesis has mentioned gossip as an immoral act in itself (Yerkovich, 1977; Bergmann, 1998; Peters & Kashima, 2015) whose moral value does not necessarily come from religion. However, in this data set, religion is observed to take the place of the humanistic sense of morality, and almost all moral acts relevant in gossip sequences are explained through religion. Luckmann (1967) explains this situation with the modernisation of societies, and claims that morality becomes a humanist feature rather than religious only if the community is modern enough to keep religion separate from other inner qualities of human beings. This can in part relate to the situation in this study; because the existence of extensive talk on religion, and the participants' tendency to relate almost everything to religion show a strong religious effect on the society. However, if this study was conducted in a different part of Turkey, the results may have been different even though this is a likely outcome for more than half of the cities and regions. Therefore, we can assume that

religion is still a high influence on society in most parts of the country; and has a crucial impact on the evaluation of people through which social typing and moralising is managed.

In sum from this difference between the previous studies on gossip which dealt with its morality-immorality, and this current one which labels the same phenomenon based on the religious stance of the gossip and the gossipee shows that different societies have different reasons for considering gossip as undesirable, and the social and cultural dynamics in each society defines the reason for this assumption. In sum, we can conclude that the perceptions about gossip change from one society to the other

6.3.2. Gossipee's Behaviour as an Indicator of Religious (Moral) Stance

Among the topics of gossip, which were analysed in Chapters 4 and 5, and discussed in Section 6.2.1, gossipee's religious belief is one of the most commonly observed ones. A sequence on negative evaluation of a person can easily be used as a means to measure that person's religious belief, or disbelief. Normally, a behaviour can be evaluated over its being moral or immoral, but in this data, problems in ordinary behaviours are explained by the gossipers with relevance to that person's religious stance rather than moral qualities. For example in Extract 23:

→4 MUS :çünkü müslüman ↑daal ki ↑o
 because muslim isn't she
 "Because she is not Muslim."

Following a gossip about MUN's beauty practice, MUS concludes that the reason behind this practice is her "not being Muslim". This finding, and its frequency in gossip talk, is interesting and worth a deeper look because it sheds a light on the participants' references to *religion* instead of *morality*. Upon observing someone's *wrong* behaviour, the participants in gossip talk evaluate this behaviour on the gossipee's religious stance, rather than evaluating the behaviour based on moral norms. The findings of this study suggest that the participants in the study assume that everyone is/ should be Muslim, and evaluate the behaviours based on this assumption. As Wood and Pearce (1980) suggest, they use strong evaluative vocabulary such as negative ways of saying non-muslim to accomplish this mission of criticality on religious beliefs. None of the earlier studies to my knowledge reported a finding on religion taking the role of morality in the

way observed in this current thesis, which can be read as a result of the cultural and social differences between the settings of the previous studies and this specific one.

6.3.3. The Ideas about Gossip Vs the Actual Behaviours

The last part of this section discusses a very controversial topic on the difference between the participants' ideas about gossip, and their actual gossip behaviours. Based on the analysis of the data used for this study, this difference is visible in two ways. In the first one, the gossipers are confronted by one of the hearers directly through a disagreement in the second turn; and then the sequence goes on with the initiator's denial of gossiping because she also thinks that gossiping is *wrong*. In the second one, people gossip about an absent third party's gossiping behaviour, labelling him/her as a *gossiper*.

For the first one, see the example in Extract 16:

- 8 MEL : [↑kele noreca:n ↑gaybet etme] sus ↑olmuş
well whatever gossip neg shush happen
- 9 geçmiş geldi geçti=
past over now
"Well, whatever. Shush, don't gossip. It happened and past, it is over now."
- 10 DON :=↑geçmiş ↑olsun dedim de, ↑böyle oldu bacım ↓diyo=
sorry to hear say and so happen sister say
"I told him I was sorry to hear what happened and he told me what happened."
- 11 TEAM :=he: yok yo- öyle dedikodu ↑yapmaz [don teyze] don teyzem
well no n- gossip neg. DON aunt DON my aunt
"Well, no no, aunt DON, my aunt DON doesn't gossip."

Here in this extract, MEL strongly opposes to DON's attempt to initiate gossip. DON, after the hearer's resistance to uptake, claims that it is not gossip, but what she heard from the absent third party (gossipee) herself. So, she reconceptualises the definition of gossip: if something is heard from the subject him/herself, telling it to others is not gossip anymore; an act can be labelled gossip only if it includes the transformation of information whose source is someone other than the gossipee, which makes the information a non-private one. Following this, TEAM orients to DON's denial, and, with her supportive words, makes it clear that gossip is an undesirable form of talk in this context. Therefore, although this and similar sequences start with a gossip

initiation, the participants including the initiator can end up agreeing on the immorality or wrongfulness of gossip as a genre of talk. To my knowledge, there is no study that points to the confrontation of gossip by explicitly saying it. However, Bergmann (1993) observes a similar attempt not to look gossipy in his study, and mentions that when someone does not want to be known as a gossip, they try to make the gossip look unintended (p.77). This form of explicit denial of gossip is quite common in this data set following non-agreement responses from hearers, which takes such forms as: ‘This is not gossip, I am telling what actually happened.’, ‘I am not gossiping, this is what she herself told me.’, ‘I am not gossiping, this is what X (another person) told me about her.’ etc. The denial from the gossip shows the negative perception towards gossip even while doing it.

Secondly, Section 5.1. explains the results of the gossip sequences where gossipees are criticised over their gossip behaviour. (See Extract 22). Gossip sequences which have *gossip* as their topic and *gossipers* as their subject are typically initiated by a story that tells how the gossipee was seen/heard to talk about someone else, and the gossip hearer agrees with adding up a second story about the same gossipee’s gossiping behaviour. Having agreed on the fact that a certain person (the gossipee of the present talk) is a ‘gossiper’, they exchange stories about seeing/hearing that person gossip about others. As has been explained and discussed throughout this thesis, gossip being immoral and against religion (Islam in our case), becomes a criticisable aspect for them to evaluate an absent third party. However, the irony here lies in doing this religious/moral evaluation through the same *immoral* tool (i.e. gossip).

Although not on gossip, an earlier study by Smith (2003) had attempted to investigate the relation between religious commitment and morality, and had claimed that ‘ideally’ parents think that there is a relation between the two. This study methodologically failed to investigate the real situation because of the research tool it used, but only focused on the ideals in minds; however, this current one looks at the same issue in real gossip talk. This interesting finding about the difference between the ideal and real explained above indicates that sometimes research tools that ask for people’s ideas on issues, such as Smith’s, do not always provide insights into what is really happening. Because in reality, when asked, (old) people tend to deny that they engage in gossip talk (Saunders, 1999), and similarly, in Percival’s (2000) ethnographic study “tenants (of a nursery home) both complained about and actively engaged in gossip” (p.306).

give them lessons by using proverbs appropriate to the gossip topic. According to the findings of this research, their elderly identity does not generally come to surface level when they are interacting between themselves. It gets visible/audible only when there are young people around, because they feel the need to make their identity as *old* relevant to maintain power.

This study differs from the existent literature in that the main focus of the previous researches was the interaction between the elderly and their care-takers or service providers (Mattsson & Haring, 1999; Bolukbasi & Arslan, 2003; Coupland et al, 1994; Robinson & Nussbaum, 2004; Wei & Mayouf, 2009). However, in this study, the main focus is the interaction between the peers. Therefore, the interactional elements in this thesis slightly differ from the previously summarised literature. The findings of this research show similarities to the ones of Robinson and Nussbaum (2004), in that they also reported religion in the form of ‘church attendance’ as one of the most common topics of talk initiated by the elderly patients in their interaction with physicians. Building on to that research, this thesis shows that it is still a common topic while they are talking to their peers, not only to younger physicians. In a similar study between elderly patients and younger physicians, Wei & Mayouf (2009) looked at the effects of social status of the elderly, and found that the social status of the elderly affects the interaction by leading them to participate in conversations more than younger physicians. The findings of this current study seem to agree with the findings of the previous one, especially when there are younger participants in talk such as the staff members or the two teachers. However, the this thesis also adds that the core members of the Community of Practice tend to have this higher status role even among the people of the same age. That is, there are some members in the group who are doing being the knowledgeable even if the other parties in talk are older than them. For example throughout the 92 hours of recordings, LUT is heard as a core member, and she generally takes the role of the expert in the group although she is the youngest resident in the place (57 years old).

In terms of elderly peer-to-peer interaction, the data used for this thesis shows similarities to the one used by Boden and Bielby (1986) in that it focuses on elderly interaction between each other rather than the care-givers. Their study found that one of the most common topics of talk among the elderly was *past*. It can be claimed that the same is relevant for the data used for this thesis as well; however, it is not possible to compare the findings as this current study has a narrower focus (i.e. gossip). In terms of general interaction, *past* is still a common topic of talk, and in

gossip interaction, it is more relevant either in gossip initiation stories, or gossip about the younger where they compare *how it was then* with *how it is now*. In the same line with the findings of Boden and Bielby, the talk of past is generally a positive thing which they refer to when they want to praise themselves.

When we compare the findings of this study with earlier studies on elderly gossip, while agreeing with Percival's (2000) findings about the functions of gossip as a friendship builder among the elderly, this study contradicts with Saunders' (1999) findings about the gossip topics in elderly talk. Saunders (1999) listed gossip topics as fashion, dating, sex, and problems of living. The only common topic of gossip between Saunders' study and this current one is the gossip about "the problems of living", but the other three, fashion, dating and sex, do not come up as topics of gossip. This difference, as is discussed in the section on topics of gossip, can be explained through the cultural and social differences between the two participating groups. It can be claimed here that, together with the age of the participants, gossip talk is also highly affected by the cultural and social environment it emerges in. Because the participants of this current study come from a small community where they would not be expected to go out for dates, or have sex out of marriage. Therefore, we can claim here that expectations of the society from the elderly is affecting their behaviour, and the topics of their gossip.

In sum, analysis of real life interactions of the elderly gave us insights into where they place themselves in the society, and how they build their status in community. It is also apparent from the findings of this research that gossip is one of the most common forms of talk they use in order to maintain this social status. One way it helps maintaining social status is the effect of gossip in making friends and building close groups. As has been discussed earlier, gossip helps the members of the elderly community make friends with the people who share gossip, while isolating people who are generally the subject of gossip or who reject joining gossip circles. This puts a pressure on the peripheral group members, who feel obliged to hide their rejection or support for the gossipee. By this means, they form their friend circuits. Also within the group, the elderly tend to use gossip to praise themselves and their expertise so as to get a higher status in their little community. In short, gossip comes up as one of the most common forms of talk in elderly interaction, and functions in various forms to keep the group dynamics active, and to help the group members get a status in their micro contexts.

6.5. Semi-institutional Talk

Together with looking at where the elderly place themselves in the society, and how they build their status in community, this study also aimed at helping the society understand how the elderly interact non-institutionally in this institutional context. The focus of this research is casual talk because, as Raymond (1996) puts it, one needs to truly interpret the structure of casual conversations and analyse the effect of the institutional context on the use of language if s/he wants to understand the nature of institutional conversations (p.20). The results of the micro analysis of casual talk, defined as “form of interaction that is not confined to specialised settings or to the execution of particular tasks” (Heritage, 1998: p.2) in this institutional context brought about two cases when the talk moves from being casual to institutional. One of them is the existence of a staff member, and the other one is the mentioning of an institutional rule. This finding supports Schegloff’s (1991) point that the *roles* of the participants, *tasks* accomplished through talk, and the *identities* of the parties in conversation make the institutional context relevant in talk.

The findings of this thesis agree with Heritage’s (2005) point that “institutional talk can occur anywhere, and by the same token, the ordinary conversation can emerge in almost any institutional context.” (p.107). In the same way, the data collected for this thesis show that gossip as a form of casual talk occurs in this institutional context. The same way as it has been discussed in the literature review chapter of this thesis, there are no certain boundaries between institutional and casual talk in the data set used for this thesis either. We can only label a piece of talk as institutional as long as “participants’ institutional or professional identities are somehow made relevant to the work activities in which they are engaged” (Drew & Heritage, 1992: p.3-4). At this point, a new concept, *semi-institutionality*, can be offered deriving from this difficulty to draw definite lines between institutional and non-institutional talk. The term ‘semi-institutional talk’ is used in this thesis to cover the interaction in institutions that are the only social living area for the residents while being managed by set rules of organisation. It takes place in an institutional setting, and there is a frequent movement between the institutional vs other roles. When we say institutional roles, we do not only mean the roles of the staff members, but also the participants’ identities as *residents of an old people’s home*. In this study, their identities often move between being an old person by their own and being a member of an old people’s home as a community of practice. The fact that they are sharing the same living environment and same

aims with those people staying in the institution makes their context a community of practice, and their talk takes the form of semi-institutional gossip, going back and forth between their personal and/or institutional identities.

In sum, from the findings of this thesis that looked mostly at the peer to peer conversations, and a little to the elderly to service provider interaction in a semi-institutional context, we can conclude that the form of talk is very fluid in terms of moving between institutional natures to non-institutional ones. This can be explained with the fact that, even if it is an institution which is ruled by certain rules and run by managerial and care taker staff, that institution is the only living space for those elderly people who stay there. This means, their daily lives are surrounded by, and sometimes limited to the rules of an institution, which is contrary to the normally accepted life form where people have more freedom in their choices. This study gave us a chance to see how the elderly use a very informal form of talk (i.e. gossip) in a formal environment, and how normal and common it gets when the exceptional state of that institution is considered. This does not mean to claim that there would be less gossip in institutions whose participants have a separate social life apart from that institution (such as schools), but it offers that further research can compare institutions in terms of how much of the participants' lives that institution covers. For example a comparative Conversation Analytic study between an orphan school and a random school where participants go 'home' after school could give further insights into this aspect of semi-institutionality.

Overall, the analysis of the gossip sequences in naturally occurring conversations of the elderly people in an institutional context (i.e. old people's home) reveals that gossip is a common form of talk among the elderly as much as it is with the other age groups, and it serves several functions in their communities of practice, either letting the elderly to place themselves at a higher status in the society, or helping them achieve and maintain group solidarity. In order to manage this, the elderly make use of various linguistic/interactional elements such as proverbs and comparisons together with cultural and religious references and/or evaluations. This study adds to the overall body of gossip and elderly research by using an emic approach to examine the real life gossip encounters in an institutional context which pointed to the fluid identities present in institutions, and also by shedding a light onto the lives of a group of people all of whose lives

are limited to an institutional context, which leads to the emergence of the term ‘semi institutional’ interaction.

6.6. Summary

This chapter provided a summary of the results of the analysis in the previous chapter, followed by a discussion combined with the existent research body, and its relevance-difference to this current one. The first part of the discussion focused on the structural organisation of gossip from the levels of interaction, response, and ending. The next section went deeper into the *content* of gossip and the findings related to gossip topics, gossip’s function as a tool for self and/or other appraisal, gossip’s function as a (dis)connection tool from the social circle, the evaporation of teacher role in gossip talk, and the use and functions of proverbs in gossip sequences were discussed in order. The third section went deeper into discuss the religion-morality relation in gossip.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

The last chapter of this thesis will first summarise the aims of the study, methods used to meet these aims, and the findings. The summary will be followed by a section on the implications of the study. The last section will list some options for the future research that can be conducted following this current one.

The aim of this PhD research was to analyse the sequential and contextual organisation of gossip in naturally occurring talk amongst the residents of an old people's home. The sequential organisation of gossip has been investigated from the perspectives of gossiper's initiation, hearer's response, and sequence ending. The second component, contextual organisation, looked at the gossipable topics, and some other interesting contextual elements observed in naturally occurring gossip talk.

In order to meet this aim of analysing the sequential and contextual organisation, long hours of audio data was collected from the tea hours of an old people's home in Turkey. 92 gossip extracts selected from this data were analysed adopting an ethnomethodological approach at micro level. That is, the teachings of Conversation Analysis was adopted as the main methodology for analysing the data used in this thesis.

The results of the analysis suggested that the initiation, response, and endings in gossip talk showed systematicities. The most commonly used initiation types were determined as *direct evaluation or news reveal, humour, fooling or sarcasm, questions, and reports of what a third party said*. The response to these attempts to initiate were dealt under four sub categories depending on what act they did in conversation, which were clarification requests upon the recognition of a problem in understanding/hearing, treating the gossip as news and responding with surprise, agreement with the gossip point, and lack of agreement. The last two alternative responses to gossip initiation (i.e. agreement and lack of agreement) were found to be managed in specific forms. Once the response turn(s) to gossip initiation were covered, five most common gossip ending types observed in data were listed as: second gossip, outside factors, dismissals, ending without signal, and proverbs to give moral lessons or to summarise the main point.

The analysis of the topics of gossip and other necessary contextual elements pointed to six items (i.e. gossip, beliefs and morality, family and relations, personality, physical acts, and appearance) as the most commonly gossiped about topics. A closer look into the context of gossip gave out some interesting results about the functions of gossip as a tool for self/other appraisal, and

(dis)connection tool from the social circle, the evaporation of teacher role in gossip talk, and the use and functions of proverbs in gossip sequences were discussed in order. Also, another interesting finding that this study pointed at was religion's role in gossip as a reference point, contrary to the common moral norm based referencing system in literature.

In sum, the results of this study are expected to help us understand how the elderly interact non-institutionally in this institutional context. How they place themselves as experts in the society by the aid of their active use of language (i.e. gossip). Having summarised the study very briefly, the next sections will focus on the implications, methodological considerations, and recommendations for future research.

7.1. Implications of the Study

The main aim of this study is to draw a picture of the sequential and contextual organisation of gossip in a semi-institutional setting of old people's home. Together with accomplishing this aim, driven from real life interaction, some implications can also be made for the old people's home staff, managers, rules and regulations, teachers or interns on temporary placement, and researchers on the area.

For the education of old people's home staff, including physicians, care-takers, or service providers, knowing the fact that gossip is an important aspect of interaction between the residents to establish norms, rules and expectations can help them gather information about the social and interactional dynamics present in the institution. This information spreading function of gossip can also be used for the purposes of defining the bullied, disliked, discluded, debauched, ill-treated residents in the place, if there exist any. Although these aspects are part of human nature and they cannot be prevented for good. Staff members' awareness of these kinds of incidences can help them developing strategies to deal with the problems which arise from them, to maintain the friendly atmosphere the elderly expect at the end of their lives.

Another benefit of gossip's information gathering nature can be used at managerial level for establishing and maintaining institutional rules. As has been mentioned in relevant parts of this thesis, although it is a formal institution with rules and regulations, this study on the real interaction between the residents shed a light on their attitude towards the rules. Even though it is understandable for an institution to be directed with regulations to keep the public order, the findings of this study suggest that this is not simply an institution that functions perfectly, it is

the only living environment for those people, and they need more flexibility to reach life satisfaction. Some of the gossip in this specific institution is about the managerial staff who are claimed to limit the residents' lives because of the requirements of the institutional rules. Having seen the importance of gossip in interaction in such institutions, the rule makers at government level, and the ensurers at institutional level can refer to the data used for this thesis to define the needs and expectations from the rules, and their flaws.

Apart from the administrators and the staff members, the findings offered in this study does also provide insights for the teachers on temporary placement. The two teachers in this research can be a good example to understand the outsiders' joining into an already existent group. The way they actively participate in such an intimate interaction as gossip is insightful for the other outsiders. Also, even more importantly, the evaporation of the teacher role when confronted with the *elderly role* which covers experience and knowledge, is quite interesting, especially when compared with the teacher role in a classical classroom. This can better be understood with a future research on gossip in formal educational contexts rather than the semi-formal context of this study.

Last but not least, this study promises implications for the researchers on selecting methodology. Although it has its flaws, which will be explained in the next section, the use of real life interaction material instead of idea-eliciting methods or quantitative approaches to such an insightful topic has proven to be an appropriate approach which could be advised to future researchers.

7.2. Methodological Considerations

This research, although probably being conducted in one of the most appropriate methods for the aims of the research, has had its weaknesses which are believed not to be major constraints for the results. The methodological considerations I, as the researcher, have about this study are the sampling of the participants, the form of data, and the issues with translation.

First of all, it should be noted here that the institution picked for this research is located in one of the average cities in Turkey, which can exemplify a large part of the country; and the amount of data was sufficient for this study. However, collecting data from one institution only can be considered one of the drawbacks of this study. Although many of the findings match with the earlier studies in totally different contexts, collecting data from at least one more institution

could have given a better insight of the situation. However, it was not possible within the scope of this thesis, it can be considered as a future research area.

The second, and probably the most important, weakness of this study is the fact that the data is audio only. The reasons what makes this a weak point has been acknowledged at various points throughout the thesis, such as interpreting some lines or silences required seeing the nonverbal elements in the interaction, which was not possible for this study. Still, I believe that, in spite of its limited audio-only form, the data gave precious insights into the interactional aspects which were underexplored especially in Turkish context.

7.3. Recommendations for Future Research

The future researchers can build on this study from two perspectives: structural and/or contextual. From the point of gossip's structure, this study investigated the initiation, response and ending types of gossip, but did not focus on the gossip body where the gossip develops. This level of the sequence can be an interesting are to investigate in micro-level. Also, the gossip ending was studied as a whole in this study, but it is sure to promise more if taken as a separate sequence from the first attempt to end till the actual ending, because gossip ending being achieved at more than one attempt is a common observation of this study, which was not investigated in detail because of the limits of this thesis.

A similar study can also be conducted in different contexts such as formal classrooms. The teacher role was not explicitly oriented by neither the teachers nor the other participants in this study. So, a similar study in a formal classroom can give different results in terms of orientations to experience, roles, and statues.

Another possible future study can take a similar approach to this current one to investigate the gossip sequences in the interaction between a different age group and compare and contrast the results with this one to see the effects of age on the results of this current study. Such a study in the same region can give insights into the differences between the generations, and see the developments/changes in the societal norms.

The same study focusing only on the gossip between the staff members of the same institution can be helpful to see the same context with different lenses. Or combining this kind of analysis with a more practical method can give practical suggestions for the improvement of the staff education.

Appendices

Appendix A

Letter for Ministry Consent

Republic of Turkey Ministry of Family and Social Politics

To: Institutional Review Board, Newcastle University, UK

I have read the information below and approve the research study entitled, " A Micro-Analytic Study of Identity Indicators of the Elderly in Their Orientation to Past vs. Future Topics in Conversations" by Tugba Aslan and give consent for the study to be conducted at TC Yozgat XXX Huzurevi.

Name and title:

Signature:

Date:

Title of the research: "A Micro-Analytic Study of Identity Indicators of the Elderly in Their Orientation to Past vs. Future Topics in Conversations"

What the study is about: The aim of the study is to analyse the micro details of the communication between the elderly as it occurs in daily life. Participants are not required to have any specific qualifications or abilities/disabilities to take part in this research. Anyone who lives in this old people's home is more than welcome, there are no limitations or exclusions in terms of participation from the residents of the house.

What we will ask the participants to do: If they agree to be in this study, we won't ask them to do anything more than they normally do in their daily lives. This will be an observational study which will take place between 11:00 am -12:00 noon for around 60 days in September 2013 and October 2013. There is not a specific topic they will be asked to talk about particularly, daily conversations they casually have with their friends in the living room of the house is exactly

what is needed for this research. They do not have to be present every day, whenever they can make it and feel like chatting with their friends is relevant for the research.

Risks and Benefits: We do not anticipate any risks to the people participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. There are no benefits to the residents of this home particularly. Elderly communication and identity displays within it is an important area of investigation and we are expecting to get a clearer picture of the nature of interaction between them by the help of this study.

Confidentiality of the data: The data collected will be used for thesis and academic publications about the study only within the PhD time span. No one else other than the researcher will have access to the raw data. Anonymised names or pseudonyms will be provided for the transcripts. The recordings will be destroyed after the research period.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. The participants may skip any days they like, being present even only once is appreciated. If they decide to take part, they are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Tugba Aslan. If you have questions, you may contact Tugba Aslan at t.aslan@newcastle.ac.uk or 00905375518174(TR) or +447734812761(UK).

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Appendix B

Letter for Institutional Consent

Republic of Turkey XXX Huzurevi

To: Institutional Review Board, Newcastle University, UK

I have read the information below and approve the research study entitled, " A Micro-Analytic Study of Identity Indicators of the Elderly in Their Orientation to Past vs. Future Topics in Conversations" by Tugba Aslan and give consent for the study to be conducted at TC XXX Huzurevi.

Name and title:

Signature:

Date:

Title of the research: "A Micro-Analytic Study of Identity Indicators of the Elderly in Their Orientation to Past vs. Future Topics in Conversations"

What the study is about: The aim of the study is to analyse the micro details of the communication between the elderly as it occurs in daily life. Participants are not required to have any specific qualifications or abilities/disabilities to take part in this research. Anyone who lives in this old people's home is more than welcome, there are no limitations or exclusions in terms of participation from the residents of the house.

What we will ask the participants to do: If they agree to be in this study, we won't ask them to do anything more than they normally do in their daily lives. This will be an observational study which will take place between 11:00 am -12:00 noon for around 60 days in September 2013 and October 2013. There is not a specific topic they will be asked to talk about particularly, daily conversations they casually have with their friends in the living room of the house is exactly what is needed for this research. They do not have to be present every day, whenever they can make it and feel like chatting with their friends is relevant for the research.

Risks and Benefits: I do not anticipate any risks to the people participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. There are no benefits to the residents of this home particularly. Elderly communication and identity displays within it is an important area of investigation and we are expecting to get a clearer picture of the nature of interaction between them by the help of this study.

Confidentiality of the data: The data collected will be used for thesis and academic publications about the study only within the PhD time span. No one else other than the researcher will have access to the raw data. Anonymised names or pseudonyms will be provided for the transcripts. The recordings will be destroyed after the research period.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. The participants may skip any days they like, being present even only once is appreciated. If they decide to take part, they are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Tugba Aslan. If you have questions, you may contact Tugba Aslan at t.aslan@newcastle.ac.uk or 00905375518174(TR) or +447734812761(UK).

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Appendix C:

Participant Consent Form

A Micro-Analytic Study of Identity Indicators of the Elderly in Their Orientation to
Past vs. Future Topics in Conversations

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick box as appropriate):

1.	I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet dated _____.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymisation of data, etc.) to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	If applicable, separate terms of consent for interviews, audio, video or other forms of data collection have been explained and provided to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Researcher:

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

Appendix D

Information Sheet

You are being asked to take part in a research study of how residents in old people's homes interact with each other in daily life. We are asking you to take part because you stay at XXX old people's home, where this study is designed to take place. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The aim of the study is to analyse the micro details of the communication as it occurs in daily life. You are not required to have any specific qualifications or abilities/disabilities to take part in this research. Anyone who lives in this home is more than welcome, there are no limitations or exclusions

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, we won't ask you to do anything more than you normally do. This will be an observational study which will take place between 11:00 am -12:00 noon for around 60 days in September 2013 and October 2013. There is not a specific topic you will be asked to talk about particularly, daily conversations you casually have with your friends here is exactly what is needed for this research. You do not have to be present every day, whenever you can make it and feel like chatting with your friends is relevant for the research. Basically, what we are asking you is to give us consent to observe you without intervening in your normal lives.

Risks and Benefits: I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. There are no benefits to you particularly. Elderly communication and identity displays within it is an important area of investigation and we are expecting to get clearer ideas about it by the aid of this study.

Your data will be confidential: The data provided will be used for thesis and academic publications about the study only within the PhD time span. No one else other than the researcher will have access to the raw data. Anonymised names or pseudonyms will be provided for the transcripts. The recordings will be destroyed after the research period.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip days you like, being present even only once is appreciated. If you decide not to take part it will not affect your current or future relationship with XXX old peoples home. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw any time.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Tugba Aslan. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Tugba Aslan at t.aslan@newcastle.ac.uk or 00905375518174(TR) or +447734812761(UK).

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Appendix E

Data Collection Schedule

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE			
1. WEEK (25 Nov -1 Dec)	25.11.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	26.11.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	27.11.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	28.11.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	29.11.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
	30.11.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
	01.12.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
2. WEEK (2 Dec- 8 Dec)	02.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	03.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	04.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	05.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	06.12.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
	07.12.2013	xxxxx	Xxxxx
	08.12.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
3. WEEK (9 Dec- 15 Dec)	09.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	10.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	11.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	12.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	13.12.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
	14.12.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx

	15.12.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
4. WEEK (16 Dec- 22 Dec)	16.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	17.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	18.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	19.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	20.12.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
	21.12.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
	22.12.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
5. WEEK (23 Dec- 29 Dec)	23.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	24.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	25.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	26.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	27.12.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
	28.12.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
	29.12.2013	xxxxx	xxxxx
6. WEEK (30 Dec- 5 Jan)	30.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	31.12.2013	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	01.01.2014	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	02.01.2014	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	03.01.2014	xxxxx	xxxxx
	04.01.2014	xxxxx	xxxxx
	05.01.2014	xxxxx	xxxxx
7. WEEK	06.01.2014	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00

(6 Jan- 12 Jan)	07.01.2014	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	08.01.2014	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	09.01.2014	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	10.01.2014	xxxxxx	xxxxxx
	11.01.2014	xxxxxx	xxxxxx
	12.01.2014	xxxxxx	xxxxxx
8. WEEK (13 Jan- 19 Jan)	13.01.2014	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	14.01.2014	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	15.01.2014	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	16.01.2014	10:00-11:00	14:00-15:00
	17.01.2014	xxxxxx	xxxxxx
	18.01.2014	xxxxxx	xxxxxx
	19.01.2014	xxxxxx	xxxxxx

Appendix F: CA Transcription Conventions

(Adapted from Atkinson and Heritage, 1984)

- [[]] Simultaneous utterances – (beginning [[) and (end]])
- [] Overlapping utterances – (beginning [) and (end])
- = Contiguous utterances (Latching intra/inter turn)
- (0.4) Represent the tenths of a second between utterances
- (.) Represents a micro-pause (1 tenth of a second or less)
- : Sound extension of a word (more colons demonstrate longer stretches)
- . Fall in tone
- , Continuing intonation (not necessarily between clauses)
- An abrupt stop in articulation
- ? Rising inflection (not necessarily a question)
- LOUD Capitals indicate increased volume
- Underline words indicate emphasis
- ↑↓ Rising or falling intonation (before part of word)
- ◦ Surrounds talk that is quieter
- hhh Audible aspirations (out breath)
- hhh Inhalations (in breath)
- .hh. Laughter within a word
- > < Surrounds talk that is faster
- < > Surrounds talk that is slower
- (what) Transcriber unsure
- (()) Analyst's notes
- \$ \$ 'smile voice'

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